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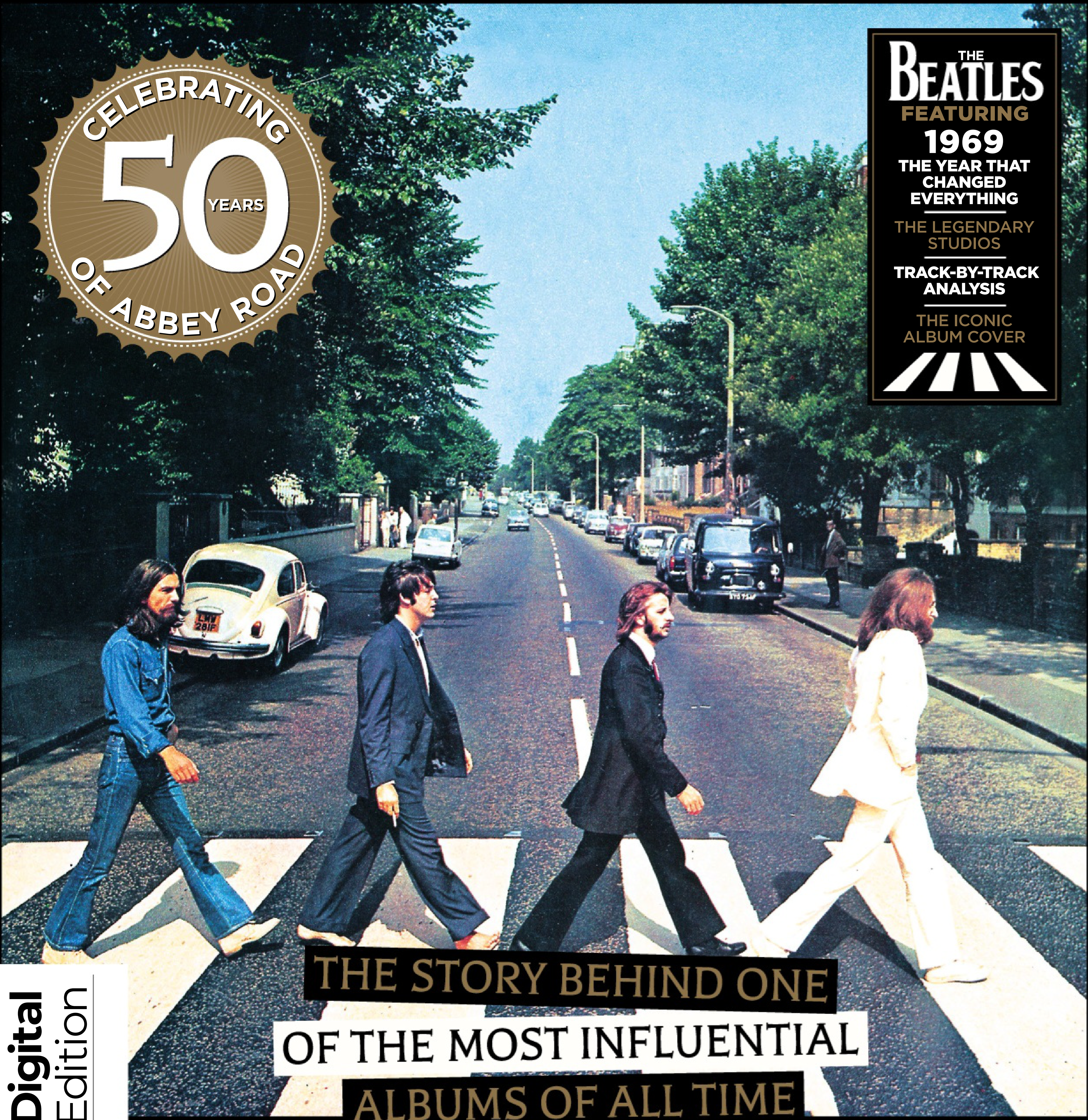
ABBEY ROAD

THE MAKING OF THE BEATLES' FINAL MASTERPIECE



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF ABBEY ROAD

THE BEATLES

FEATURING

1969
THE YEAR THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

THE LEGENDARY STUDIOS

TRACK-BY-TRACK ANALYSIS

THE ICONIC ALBUM COVER

THE STORY BEHIND ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ALBUMS OF ALL TIME

COME TOGETHER SOMETHING **MAXWELL'S SILVER HAMMER** OH! DARLING **OCTOPUS'S GARDEN** I WANT YOU (SHE'S SO HEAVY) **HERE COMES THE SUN** BECAUSE **YOU NEVER GIVE ME YOUR MONEY** SUN KING **MEAN MR MUSTARD** POLYTHENE PAM **SHE CAME IN THROUGH THE BATHROOM WINDOW** GOLDEN SLUMBERS **CARRY THAT WEIGHT** THE END **HER MAJESTY**

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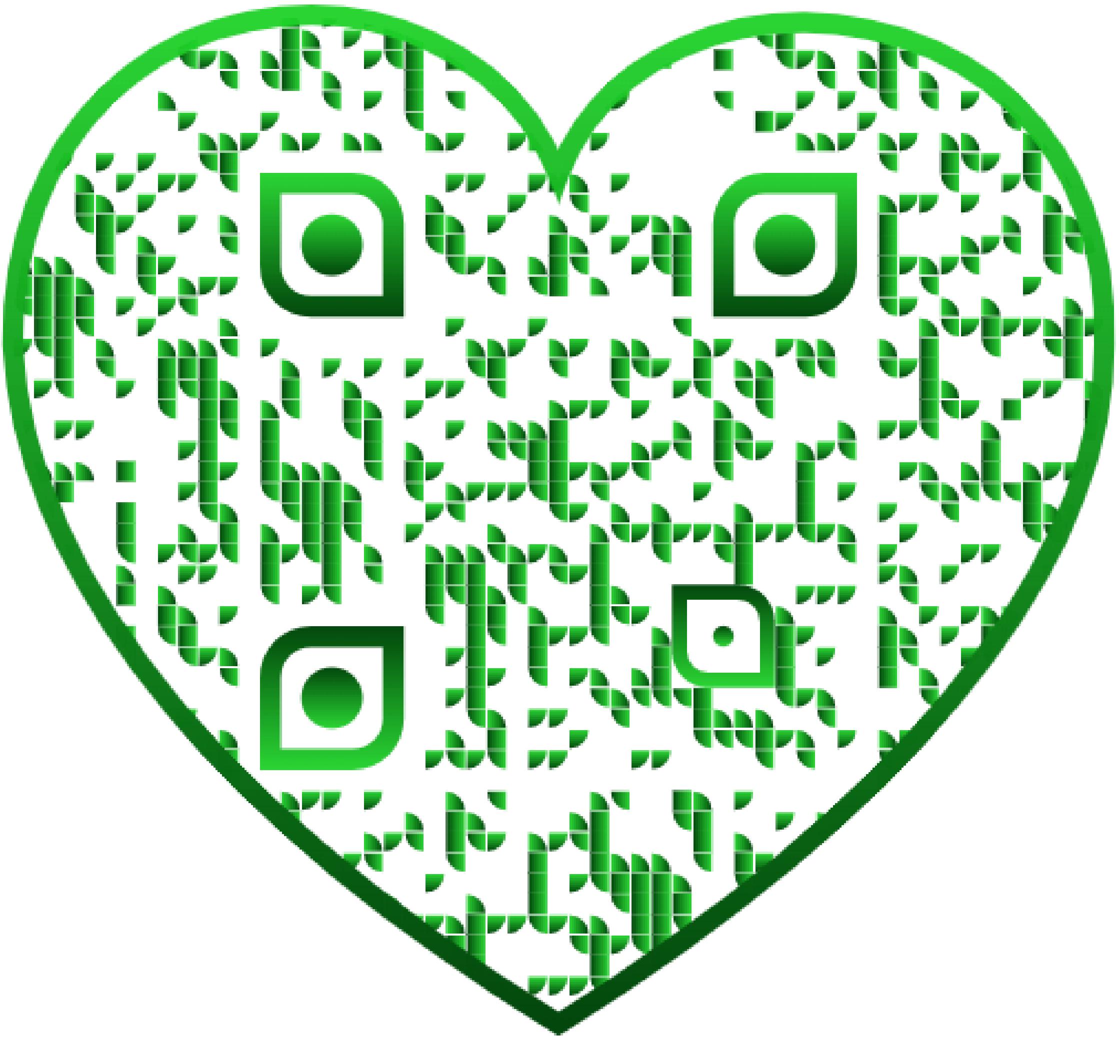

WELCOME TO

ABBEY ROAD
50th ANNIVERSARY

On 8th August 1969, John, Paul, George and Ringo strode across the zebra crossing outside their favourite studios to create the cover image for their next album. Little did they know that five decades later fans would still flock to Abbey Road for the chance to follow in their idols' footsteps.

Abbey Road has become one of The Beatles' best-loved albums, influencing generations of musicians and producers all over the world. In this book, we celebrate the groundbreaking record and its enduring legacy. Discover the stories behind the songs, the creation of *that* iconic photograph and what made 1969 such a pivotal year in music and history.

Abbey Road may have marked the end of the road for The Beatles, but even amid personal and professional tensions, the band carefully crafted a classic.

ABBEY ROAD
50th ANNIVERSARY

Future PLC Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill,
Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EZ

Editorial
Editor **Jacqueline Snowden**
Designer **Briony Duguid**
Editorial Director **Jon White**
Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**

Contributors
Charles Ginger, Henry Yates, Ian Fortnam, Jon Wells, Kate Marsh, Katy Stokes, Michael Leonard, Neil Crossley, Rob Hughes, Timothy Williamson

Cover images
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Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com

International
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely, Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman**

Management
Chief Content Officer **Aaron Asadi**
Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**

Printed by William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

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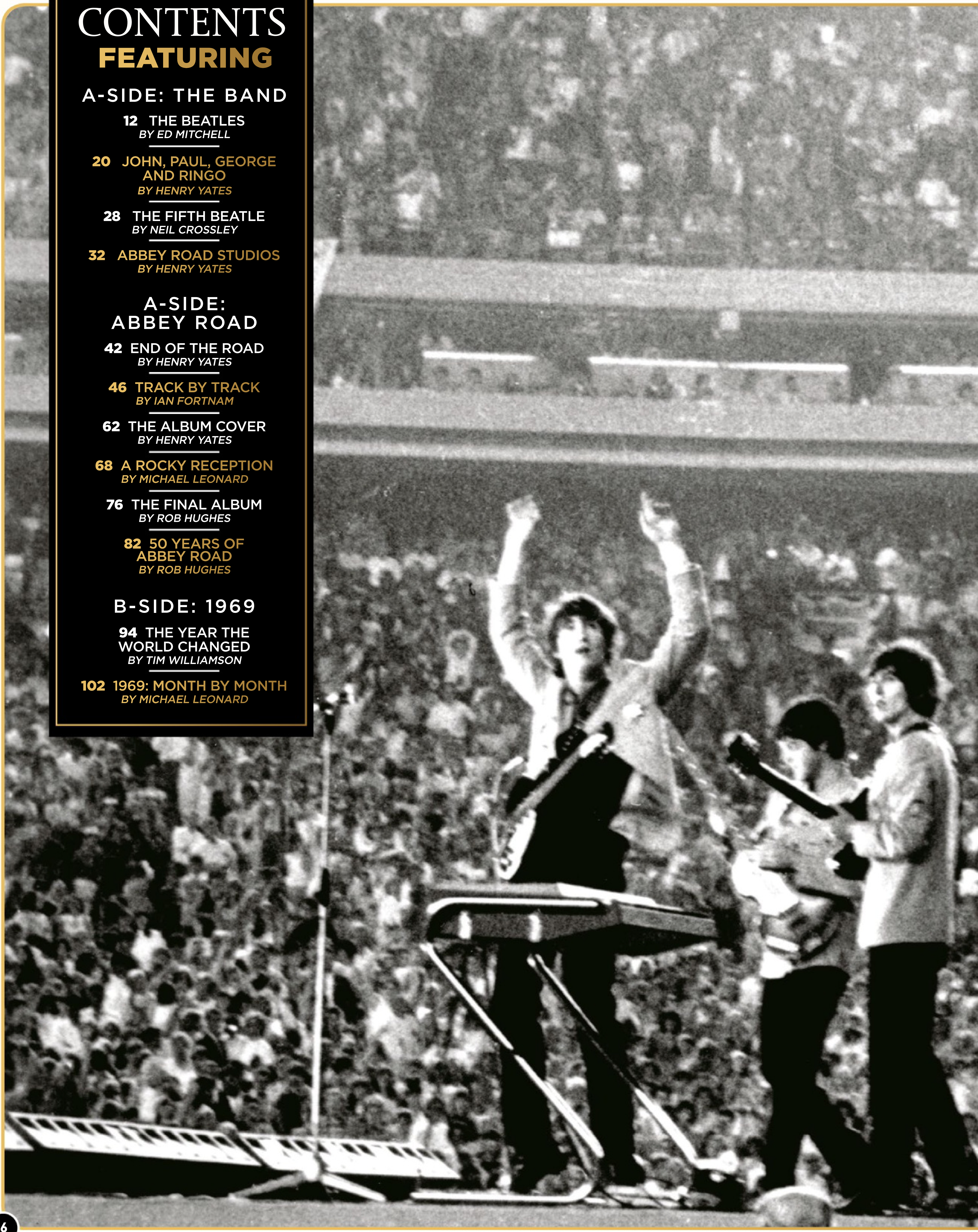

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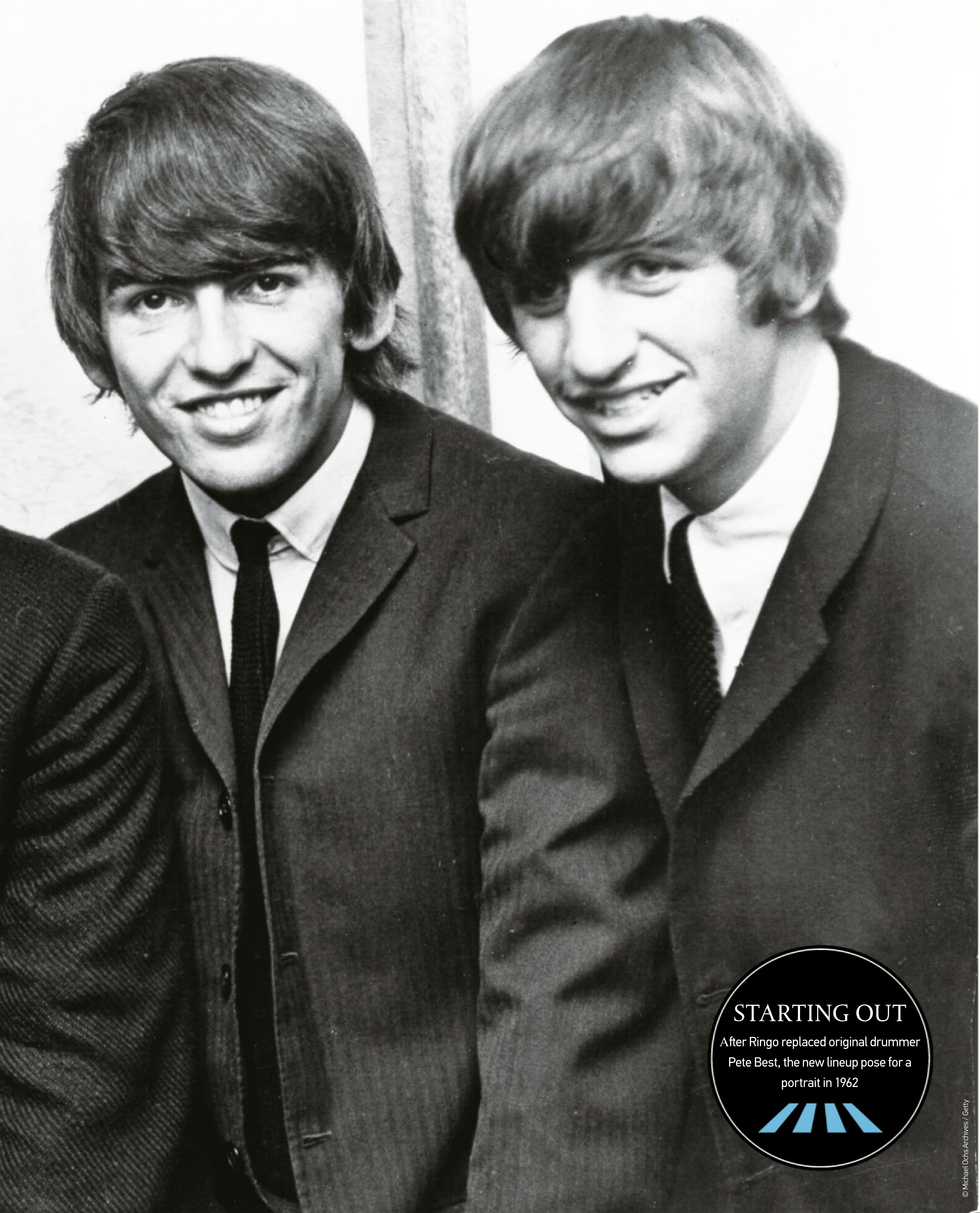

STARTING OUT

After Ringo replaced original drummer Pete Best, the new lineup pose for a portrait in 1962

© Michael Ochs Archives / Getty

A-SIDE: THE BAND

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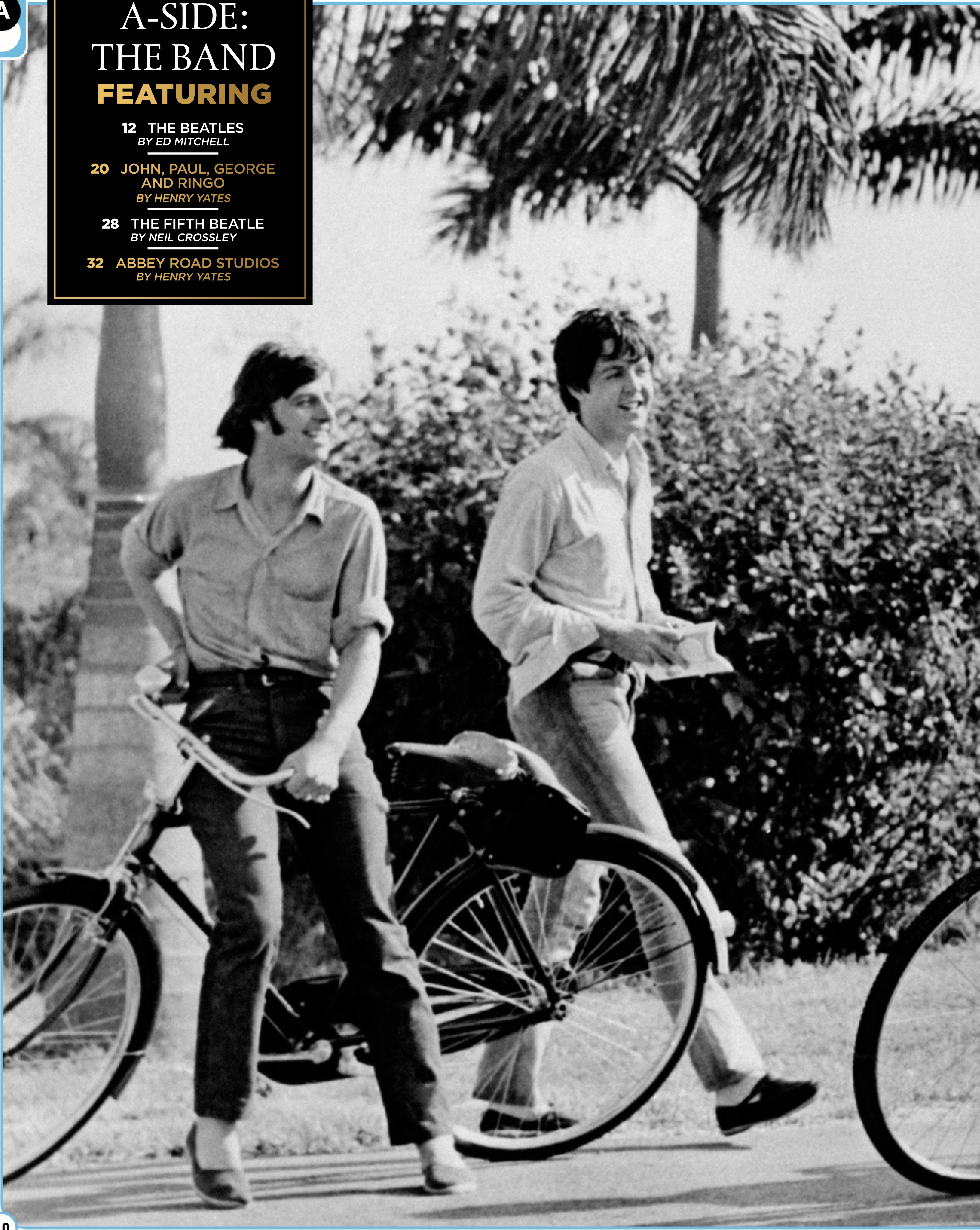

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THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY

In just over seven years, The Beatles went from lovable mop-tops that wanted to hold your hand to musical geniuses that took us all on a magical mystery tour. Even now, decades after they officially went their separate ways, the Fab Four's worldwide audience remains as captive as ever. We salute the greatest band of all time

John Lennon went crazy in Hamburg. He was 19 years old, obsessed with rock 'n' roll and high on speed. When he wasn't fighting with members of the audience or playing guitar in his underpants with a toilet seat round his neck, he would antagonise the club's German patrons with Nazi salutes. Once he even urinated from a window onto some passing nuns… just for laughs.

Lennon was playing eight hours a night, seven days a week with his band, The Beatles. Little did the young men know that within a few years they would be the biggest group in the world. But for the moment, they were just going off their heads and having a blast.

The sound of The Beatles in Hamburg is best described as raw power. Little amps running at full capacity with their valves glowing in the gloomy darkness of The Indra Club (in the seedy district of St Pauli and where the band would complete a 48-night stint). The boys singing their lungs out, beating the hell out of their guitars, trying not to get killed by the regulars who would shout "Mach schau!" (which translates as 'put on a good show'). They did and then some. "John used to dance around like a gorilla," remembered lead guitarist George Harrison years later. "We'd all knock our heads together… things like that."

"Evolution and diversity," says Slipknot's Jim Root of The Beatles' contribution to popular music. "From *Please Please Me* to *Abbey Road*, they went from standards to experimentation and back. To me, they were much more than a band. They were pioneers in the relatively new world of rock 'n' roll and pop."

There were key events that pushed The Beatles in a certain direction and influenced their sound. These milestones include the group's tough

apprenticeship in the clubs of Hamburg and subsequent and triumphant return to Liverpool to play at the legendary Cavern Club. It was at the Cavern Club in 1961 that they first met their future manager Brian Epstein, who would put them in suits and eventually secure them a record contract with EMI in 1962.

That year The Beatles' first single, *Love Me Do*, was released and the band's classic line-up was in place: rhythm guitarist John Lennon, bassist Paul McCartney, lead guitarist George Harrison and drummer Ringo Starr. Four lads that would conquer the world as a self-contained unit, having written their own songs. Not a big deal these days, but in the early 1960s it was unusual for a British pop group to write their own material…

The foursome were always seeking out new sounds and recording techniques. Anything that could help them grow as artists would be thrown into the mix. This need to always be moving forward dates back to when they were young lads in Liverpool trying to teach themselves guitar: "We used to travel for miles for a new [guitar] chord in Liverpool. We'd take bus rides for hours to visit the guy who knew B7!" Paul McCartney once reminisced. "None of us knew how to finger it. We sat there and he played it a few times, then we said, 'Brilliant, thanks!' We already had E and A. The B7 chord was the final piece in the jigsaw."

Lennon and McCartney were the band's main songwriters; George would blossom as a composer after The Beatles quit touring in 1966. Early on in their partnership, John and Paul made the

ABOVE LEFT: The Beatles live on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in New York , 1964

ABOVE RIGHT: The Fab Four are as relevant now as they were in the glorious technicolour of the *Sgt. Pepper* era

"THE BEATLES WERE MORE THAN A BAND. THEY WERE PIONEERS IN THE WORLD OF ROCK 'N' ROLL AND POP"

JIM ROOT, SLIPKNOT GUITARIST

decision to credit any song they wrote to Lennon/McCartney… even if one of them wrote a song without the other's help.

Although well-researched books like Ian MacDonald's essential Beatles bible, *Revolution In The Head*, now detail which Beatles songs were genuine collaborations and which were solo efforts, there were differences in John and Paul's writing styles that would often give the game away: "He [Paul] provided a lightness, an optimism, while I would always go for the sadness, the discords, a certain bluesy edge," Lennon commented. A prime example of this contrast is the song *Getting Better* on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. While Paul's verse and chorus lyrics build in optimism ('I

RIGHT: 1965: The Beatles were the first band to play a baseball stadium, Shea Stadium in New York

FAR RIGHT: The Beatles' entire recorded catalogue was remastered in 2009

© LONDON FEATURES INTERNATIONAL

THE FAB FOUR… BEATLES GIGS! Their greatest 'you shoulda been there' moments

The Cavern Club, Liverpool 3rd August 1963

John Lennon first played Liverpool's Cavern Club with his band The Quarrymen in 1957. The then jazz-only club had a strictly no rock 'n' roll policy that Lennon promptly ignored, belting out Elvis Presley's *Don't Be Cruel*. This did not go down well with the club's management or punters. The Beatles played their first show at the Cavern Club at lunchtime on 21st February 1961, having recently returned from Hamburg. They would eventually put in 292 appearances at the little club in Matthew Street. Their farewell show for the home crowd on 3rd August 1963 came just a few months before they conquered America. The atmosphere in there must have been electric.

Shea Stadium, New York, 15th August 1965

The Beatles played Shea Stadium on their second tour of the States in 1965. The noise generated by the 55,600-strong crowd was so great that the band couldn't hear themselves onstage. They only had 100-watt Vox amps! The situation was so ridiculous that the lads dissolved into hysterics and Lennon began playing his Vox Continental organ with his elbows. In terms of historical importance, the Shea Stadium show marked the high-point of 'Beatlemania' and also contributed to the band's decision to quit touring for good the following year. Footage of the show can be found on *The Beatles Anthology* DVD.

Candlestick Park, San Francisco 29th August 1966

Candlestick Park was The Beatles' last official concert. John, George and Ringo had all expressed their desire to quit touring with only Paul holding out, hoping they would change their minds. By 1966, even Paul wanted out. Touring had become a nightmare with John's 'bigger than Jesus' episode resulting in a backlash against The Beatles in the United States. Their albums were destroyed in organised burnings and their concerts picketed by the Ku Klux Klan. The fact that the audiences couldn't even hear them play due to screaming fans made the decision to quit easier. They bowed out with *Long Tall Sally* at Candlestick Park – and that was that.

The rooftop concert, London 30th January 1969

During the recording of the *Let It Be* album and film, Paul McCartney had suggested that the band end the project with a live performance. Venue suggestions included a small club (McCartney's preferred choice), a cruise ship or a lunatic asylum. Unsurprisingly, the last suggestion came from Lennon. In the end, The Beatles headed up to the roof of their Apple headquarters and played five songs including *Don't Let Me Down* and *Get Back*. The sound of the group playing brought the streets below to a standstill forcing the police to intervene. The Beatles fought the law… but the law won!

"WE USED TO TRAVEL FOR MILES FOR A NEW CHORD. WE HAD E AND A. B7 WAS THE FINAL JIGSAW PIECE"

PAUL McCARTNEY

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THE FAB FOUR… BEATLES RIFFS! The band's most iconic guitar lines

I Want To Hold Your Hand (Past Masters – Volume One)

I Want To Hold Your Hand kicked the door open to America for The Beatles. The song's intro riff is a simple but thrilling slice of rock 'n' roll. Add to it the hand claps, harmony vocals on the chorus and George's cool little guitar licks, and it's no wonder the US teens went mad for it. John played his Hamburg-era Rickenbacker 325 while George plucked his big Gretsch 6122 Country Gentleman. And – as with all the early Beatles records – Paul used his Höfner 500/1 violin bass. For laughs, check out The Beatles singing the song in German on the *Past Masters – Volume One* compilation. Das Beatles rock, ja!

Day Tripper (Past Masters – Volume Two)

"That's mine," said Lennon. "The guitar lick, the guitar break, and the whole bit." He didn't play *Day Tripper*'s solo though; George did. Lennon played his parts on his '64 Rickenbacker 325 – the guitar presented to him in Miami on the band's first US tour. George apparently used a Gibson ES-345 on the song. 'Day tripper' was a reference to people who took drugs, dressed hip and raised hell at the weekend, then went back to respectable 9 to 5 jobs on Monday morning. Lennon was basically taking the mickey out of part-time hippies.

She Said She Said (Revolver, 1966)

Like that other mid '60s Beatles classic Rain, *She Said She Said* opens with an infectious fuzz riff played by George Harrison, probably on his Gibson SG. Harrison also played bass on the song after Lennon and McCartney had a fall-out. The inspiration for the song stems from an encounter John had with the actor Peter Fonda in Los Angeles. Hanging out with The Byrds, on some mind-altering substance, John freaked out when Fonda kept saying he knew what it was like to be dead. "Listen mate, shut up about that stuff!" Lennon growled. Still, he got a brilliant song out of it.

I Want You (She's So Heavy) (Abbey Road, 1969)

In contrast to The Beatles nailing their first album in under 10 hours, the heavy soul of *I Want You (She's So Heavy)* took six months to perfect before Lennon was happy. Considering it was assembled from three takes the track sounds organic – you can even hear Harrison flick his guitar's pickup selector switch. Compared with the contrived power of the earlier *Helter Skelter* (*The White Album*, 1968), *I Want You…* sounds genuinely ominous. Incidentally, Mötley Crüe referenced the song at the end of their tender ode to baked goods, *Slice Of Your Pie* (*Dr Feelgood*, 1989). At least we think that's what it was about.

---

have to admit it's getting better'), John's contribution ('Can't get no worse!') is typically more downbeat. The Beatles' songbook is peppered with little lyrical twists like this.

"I loved Paul's way of writing, but also John's," said Conny Bloom of Hanoi Rocks. "They were just so different."

1964 was the year The Beatles conquered America. It has been suggested that the assassination of US president John F Kennedy in November 1963 had left the country in mourning and in need of a tonic. *I Want To Hold Your Hand* was just what it needed. The boys' appearance on Sunday night staple *The Ed Sullivan Show* on 9 February 1964 cemented their position as the biggest band in history. Years later, Sir Paul McCartney remembered hanging out backstage waiting to perform live on American TV for the first time: "The floor manager came up and said, 'Are you nervous?' I said no, and he said, 'You should be… there's 73 million people watching!'"

> "FOR JOHN AND PAUL, GUITAR PLAYING IS A MEANS TO END… I'M A GUITAR FANATIC!"
>
> GEORGE HARRISON

Actually, it was more like 74 million, the largest TV audience up to that point – and almost half the population of America. The Beatles hit the stage and launched into *All My Loving* wearing matching suits and their beautiful guitars – a performance that would become totally iconic.

Watching at home was a bunch of future rock stars like Tom Petty, Bruce Springsteen and Joe Satriani. They all later said that, it was at that moment, they knew exactly what they wanted to be… a Beatle.

"Back when I was a kid watching The Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, I wanted to be Ringo," explained Satriani. "Soon after I switched to wanting to be George. I liked his attitude, unique guitar stylings and strange sounding voice."

The Beatles were now officially the biggest band in the world. They made a movie (*A Hard Day's Night*), toured the globe and introduced the world to the beautiful sound of the Rickenbacker 360/12 12-string electric guitar. George used the guitar for the iconic opening chord of *A Hard Day's Night* and other classics like *I Should Have Known Better.*

While it would take George a few years to find his feet as a songwriter, he always seemed to come up with great guitar sounds – and great sounds in general. Adding sitar to classics like *Norwegian Wood* (*This Bird Has Flown*), he also helped The Beatles dominate the psychedelic era with his spine-tingling fuzz riffing on *Rain* and *Paperback Writer.* Whether he was rocking out on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* or adding fills to songs like *Old Brown Shoe* (1967-1970), George always played the perfect part with the coolest sound. It was what he loved to do.

"For John and Paul, songwriting is pretty important and guitar playing is a means to an end," explained George in the 1960s. "While they're making up new tunes I can thoroughly enjoy myself just doodling around with a guitar for a whole evening. I'm fascinated by new sounds I can get from different instruments I try out. Just call me a guitar fanatic!"

On the early Beatles records John Lennon played the little Rickenbacker 325 guitar that he'd bought in Hamburg. George used his black '57 Gretsch Duo Jet and Paul played the Höfner 500/1 violin bass that would become his trademark. John and George also used a pair of Gibson J-160E electro-acoustics that they'd ordered from Rushworth's Music House store in Liverpool. These had singlecoil pickups mounted on the body just below the fingerboard.

The band had also taken delivery of Vox AC30 amplifiers to replace the tatty gear that they'd used in Hamburg and at their legendary Cavern Club gigs in Matthew Street in Liverpool. The studio technicians at EMI were horrified at the condition the band's backline was in!

While Lennon and McCartney would stick with their Rickenbacker and Höfner instruments (John until 1964; Paul still plays his violin basses to this day), George was always on the sniff for something new. In 1963 he bought a pair of Gretsch Country Gentleman guitars a few months apart, from a music shop in London, and retired his old Duo Jet.

By the mid '60s George had grown weary of his earlier Beatles gear and began to experiment again. He bought a Gibson SG and, along with John and Paul, started playing an Epiphone Casino – which was probably the most important guitar of the band's later period. Lennon would strip the varnish off his Casino and play it until the band's break-up in 1970.

Almost five decades after they officially split, the world is still captivated by The Beatles. In 2009, Apple Corps releases remastered editions of the band's studio albums on 9th September, the same day that *The Beatles: Rock Band* game launched. The Fabs are as big now as they ever were and their influence on popular music has never been – and may never be – equalled.

Testament guitarist Alex Skolnick sums it up: "The Beatles are the most influential music group of all time. They made their mark on nearly every conceivable genre of music from jazz (*Michelle*) and classical (*Eleanor Rigby*), to heavy metal (*Helter Skelter*) and world music (*Within You Without You*)."

After they split the former Beatles were often asked about the band's legacy. George Harrison's quip about how they'd done so much, changed the world, and made it all look so simple was the best: "If we'd known we were going to be The Beatles, we'd have tried harder!"

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ABOVE: Suited and booted: The Beatles as 'styled' by manager Brian Epstein

A

THE FAB FOUR… BEATLES GUITAR SOLOS! By George! Sometimes by John or Paul

Nowhere Man
(Rubber Soul, 1965)

One of Lennon's greatest songs, *Nowhere Man* has a distinctive guitar sound thanks to a pair of Sonic Blue Fender Stratocasters. John recorded the rhythm part on his Gibson J-160E electro-acoustic before he and George played the solo in unison on their matching Fenders. The guys were still recording with their usual Vox AC30 30-watt valve amps although they had actually taken delivery of two Vox AC100 amps by this time and may have used them on the track. The *Nowhere Man* solo isn't difficult to play. The hard bit is coming up with something so melodically beautiful and not being tempted to overplay it.

Something
(Abbey Road, 1969)

Both John Lennon and Paul McCartney – who never really had any time for George Harrison's songwriting – loved *Something*. While George felt that McCartney had overplayed the bassline for the song, listening to it now confirms what a fantastic bassist Macca is. George's solo is everything a great solo should be: melodic, tasteful, lyrical and respectful to the feel of the song. George apparently played the solo on a refinished red Gibson Les Paul he called Lucy, which was given to him by Eric Clapton. This is probably the same guitar Clapton used for the solo on *While My Guitar Gently Weeps* on *The White Album*.

© REDFERNS/GETTY

The End
(Abbey Road, 1969)

With The Beatles about to head their separate ways, it's poignant that one of the best tracks on their penultimate album *Abbey Road* was a guitar solo featuring John, Paul and George duelling it out. Ringo added a drum solo to *The End* but it was very much under protest, bless him. On the recording of this track, Lennon used his stripped Epiphone Casino, Harrison played his Gibson Les Paul and McCartney headed for his sunburst Fender Esquire (a single pickup Telecaster). After the solo reaches its climax McCartney sings, 'And in the end / The love you take / Is equal to the love / You make'. Now that's what you call signing off in style!

Let It Be
(Let It Be, 1970)

As we've seen, The Beatles could produce amazing records even in the midst of the bad atmosphere hanging around the studio during the *Let It Be* sessions. The album's title track features a beautiful solo from George, that was most likely played on his Fender 'Rosewood' Telecaster. Three versions of *Let It Be* – with different guitar solos – exist. In our humble opinion, the version on the *Past Masters* collection is the best. Don't just take our word for it though: the other two versions are on the *Let It Be* album (1970) and the remixed *Let It Be… Naked* record released in 2003.

Beatle's Timeline

20th November 1959
George buys his first solid body guitar, a Futurama at Hessy's Music Store in Liverpool. It costs him just under £60. That's nearly a grand in today's money!

June 1961
Paul gets his first Höfner 500/1 violin bass after Stu Sutcliffe leaves The Beatles. John and George refuse to switch to bass so Paul is forced to do it.

9th November 1961
The Fab Four's future manager, Brian Epstein, watches the band perform for the first time at Liverpool's Cavern Club. He likes what he sees.

1st January 1962
The Beatles audition for Decca Records. The label turns them down with the infamous statement, "Guitar groups are on the way out". Oops!

14th February 1964
John takes delivery of a new Rickenbacker 325 in Miami, Florida while rehearsing for The Beatles' second live appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

9th October 1964
George's future SG Standard leaves the Gibson factory to start its long journey to England. George will begin using it on the Revolver sessions in 1966.

THE FAB FOUR… BEATLES FILMS! 'Yellow Submarine'… denied!

A Hard Day's Night 1964

A Hard Day's Night was described by one critic at the time as the "Citizen Kane of jukebox musicals". Big words but the film is great. The musical performances like *If I Fell* and *I Should Have Known Better* are complemented by some good acting by The Beatles and old lags like Wilfred Brambell (old man Steptoe of *Steptoe And Son* TV show fame). Like the Beatles flicks that followed, Ringo is the star of the show. The scenes of him shuffling around old London causing mayhem are hilarious. The opening shot of the lads being chased by hordes of screaming girls is simply iconic.

Help! 1965

A bonkers mess of cults and mad scientists with a bemused (and apparently stoned) Fab Four stuck in the middle. *Help!* was a big influence on *The Monkees* TV series launched the following year. Shot on location in the Bahamas and the Alps (they'd always wanted to go there, said Paul), the film revolves around a sacrificial ring stuck on Ringo's finger. Once again, Ringo takes centre stage providing some genuinely comic moments and the music, as ever, is fantastic. The band's performance on Salisbury Plain surrounded by the British Army is worth the cost of the DVD alone. Great fun.

Magical Mystery Tour 1967

The concept was simple: get a bus, load it up with The Beatles, their mates and some circus performers, then drive around Britain and wait for magical adventures to happen. Unfortunately, nothing did happen. But *Magical Mystery Tour* is still an interesting piece of work thanks to some great 'music video' moments, in particular the unforgettable spectacle of The Beatles performing *I Am The Walrus* wearing those crazy animal masks. *Magical Mystery Tour* was panned when it was first shown on Boxing Day TV in 1967 but it has since become a classic.

Let It Be 1970

While it was intended as a unique insight into the band's studio work, *Let It Be* is more a fascinating documentary of The Beatles falling out of love with each other. McCartney had been effectively running The Beatles since the death of the band's manager Brian Epstein in August of 1967 and the tension between him and John and George is obvious. In one chilling scene of the film Paul lays out his ideas for the band's future to John only to be met with complete silence. In typical Beatles style, the music of *Let It Be* maintains the band's magic touch with the title track being a particular standout.

13th October 1965
McCartney lays down a brilliant guitar solo on *Drive My Car*. The song will become the opening track on the upcoming *Rubber Soul* album.

8th November 1965
Paul runs his bass through a Tone Bender fuzz box on *Think For Yourself* during the *Rubber Soul* sessions. The album would be released a month later.

6th December 1966
The Beatles begin working on the first song for their eighth studio album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The tune is called *When I'm Sixty-Four*.

10th November 1967
The Beatles record a promo film for *Hello Goodbye* dressed in their *Sgt. Pepper* uniforms. Lennon uses his new Martin D-28 acoustic.

1st December 1968
George receives the custom Fender Rosewood Telecaster he played on *Let It Be*. The Tele has its own seat on the plane from the United States.

3rd January 1970
The Beatles start work on *I Me Mine*, the last song recorded by the group. Only Paul, George and Ringo make it to the session.

JOHN LENNON

Peacenik. Agent provocateur. Angry young man. The Beatles legend has a thousand faces, but the real John Lennon is right there in his songs

In December 1970, John Lennon was asked by *Rolling Stone* magazine if he considered himself a genius. The former Beatle's reply – "If there's such a thing, I am one" – might seem conceited, but to say anything else would have been ludicrous. If the term can be applied to anyone in the pantheon, then it must surely be bestowed on the man who broke down the limits of what popular music could say and do, who wrote *Help!*, *Don't Let Me Down*, *Strawberry Fields Forever*, *A Day In The Life*, *Come Together* and all the rest.

Lennon was an easy artist to worship but a harder man to love. Born at Liverpool Maternity Hospital on 9th October 1940, the singer, by his own admission, had a cruel streak as a youth, and that fed into his Beatles career, where he was the barbed counterpoint to Paul McCartney's optimism and the author of the band's most biting songs. As his highest-profile acolyte, Noel Gallagher, pointed out, Lennon "had an edge", whether that was baiting the American Bible Belt with his claims to be "more popular than Jesus" or sabotaging McCartney's upbeat *Getting Better* with his gallows-humour asides ("It can't get no worse.")

In early years, Lennon played the tough rock 'n' roller, driving The Beatles' covers-heavy sets with his pumped-up, highly underrated rhythm guitar style ("I'm not very good technically," he noted, "but I can make it howl and move.") But with maturity, Lennon's musicianship developed light and shade, while his best songs became open-hearted and hugely evocative, mirroring a kinder man who now decried the Vietnam War and called for peace.

There was the haunted piano melody and newspaper-clipping lyric of *A Day In The Life*. The woozy throb of *Strawberry Fields Forever*, its title nodding to a childhood when Lennon already knew he was "different". The retooled Mississippi blues of *Come Together*. The mind-expanding *Tomorrow Never Knows*, on which Lennon had told producer George Martin he wanted to sound "like the Dalai Lama singing from the highest mountain top".

Lennon's post-Beatles output couldn't quite reach those heights – but perhaps it might have done were it not for the shocking incident of 8th December 1980, when the songwriter was gunned down in New York aged 40. But even death couldn't snuff out his legend. Lennon still looms over every aspirant songwriter, stares from every student wall and is cited by every artist who matters. 'Genius' is the only word that doesn't fall short.

BELOW: Lennon as a boy, pictured aged nine with his mother, Julia Lennon

RIGHT: "If being an egomaniac means I believe in what I do and in my art or music, then in that respect you can call me that… I believe in what I do, and I'll say it"

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"I BELIEVE IN WHAT I DO, AND I'LL SAY IT"

JOHN LENNON

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PAUL McCARTNEY

Songwriting god, Sixties survivor and spokesman for the greatest band on Earth, Paul McCartney has spent half a century as a man on the run

© Michael Putland / Getty

"IF I WANT TO SAY ANYTHING, I'LL WRITE A SONG"

PAUL McCARTNEY

The most backhanded compliment in rock 'n' roll is that Paul McCartney was the "cuddly Beatle". Put it down to the puppyish good looks of his youth, the avuncular thumbs-up image of his later years or the mere fact that he survived the ride, but The Beatles bassist has sometimes laboured under his portrayal as less artsy or edgy than his late songwriting partner, John Lennon.

In reality, even a cursory glance at McCartney's catalogue and Beatles career sinks this theory. The bassist balanced his amenable nature with a fearless appetite for musical revolution, slashing and burning pop's conventional wisdom. Nobody has pushed the envelope further for longer.

McCartney was born in Liverpool on 18th June 1942, but he was forged in the white heat of his partnership with Lennon, after a note-perfect rendition of Eddie Cochran's *Twenty Flight Rock* secured his spot in The Quarrymen. As The Beatles set out, the pair discovered a rare songwriting chemistry – early cuts were penned "eyeball to eyeball" – but it ultimately proved too combustible, sending them into their own creative spheres (albeit with each writer often inviting the other to fix his song's holes). And it was here that McCartney thrived, his peerless melodic instincts free to swoop and soar though always anchored by the brown thrub of his favourite Hofner violin bass.

The king of Sixties London, McCartney was the fulcrum that linked all the great bands of the era: he was tight with everyone from the Stones to The Byrds. Yet the bassist was competitive too; some of his best songs were spurred by the desire to outdo Lennon (*Penny Lane* was his answer to *Strawberry Fields Forever*) and Brian Wilson of The Beach Boys (the bassist took *Pet Sounds* as his cue to pull out all the stops with *Sgt. Pepper*). And when McCartney was firing on all cylinders, there was nobody to touch him. Fans fiercely respect Lennon's *A Day In The Life*, of course, but it's *Let It Be* and *Hey Jude* that they sing until their throats are raw.

Wilson once noted that McCartney "has so much music in him, it seems like he never runs out of ideas", and so it proved, across a massively prolific solo career whose peaks – like 1973's *Band On The Run* and 1997's *Flaming Pie* – nudged the brilliance of The Beatles. Now approaching his eighties, his status as the world's greatest living songwriter, bar none, is secure.

ABOVE: McCartney enjoyed post-Beatles success with Wings (pictured, 1974) and continues to perform as a solo artist today

LEFT: "What I have to say is all in the music. If I want to say anything, I write a song"

GEORGE HARRISON

The Beatles guitarist was a quiet revolutionary and forced his way into the spotlight with some of the band's most perfect songs

In any other band, George Harrison would have been the main event. A master guitarist with poster-boy looks. An accomplished singer whose cultural antennae was receiving everything from the wisdom of Hare Krishna to the sitar-playing of Ravi Shankar. A songwriter capable of cutting diamonds like *Something, Taxman, While My Guitar Gently Weeps* and *Here Comes The Sun*. Some felt it was the guitarist's great misfortune to be in a band alongside two principals of the stature of Lennon and McCartney – but Harrison seemed content to operate as the ultimate second fiddle. As Dave Grohl put it, "He was the secret weapon."

On 6th February 1958, when Harrison joined The Quarrymen on the strength of his chord knowledge and a virtuoso rendition of Bill Justis' R&B hit *Raunchy*, it seemed the role of this bus driver's son would be to decorate Lennon and McCartney's songs with his instrumental flair. This he did superbly on the band's early sides: revisit his leads from *Please Please Me* and *With The Beatles* or the thrilling clang of his 12-string Rickenbacker at the start of *A Hard Day's Night*.

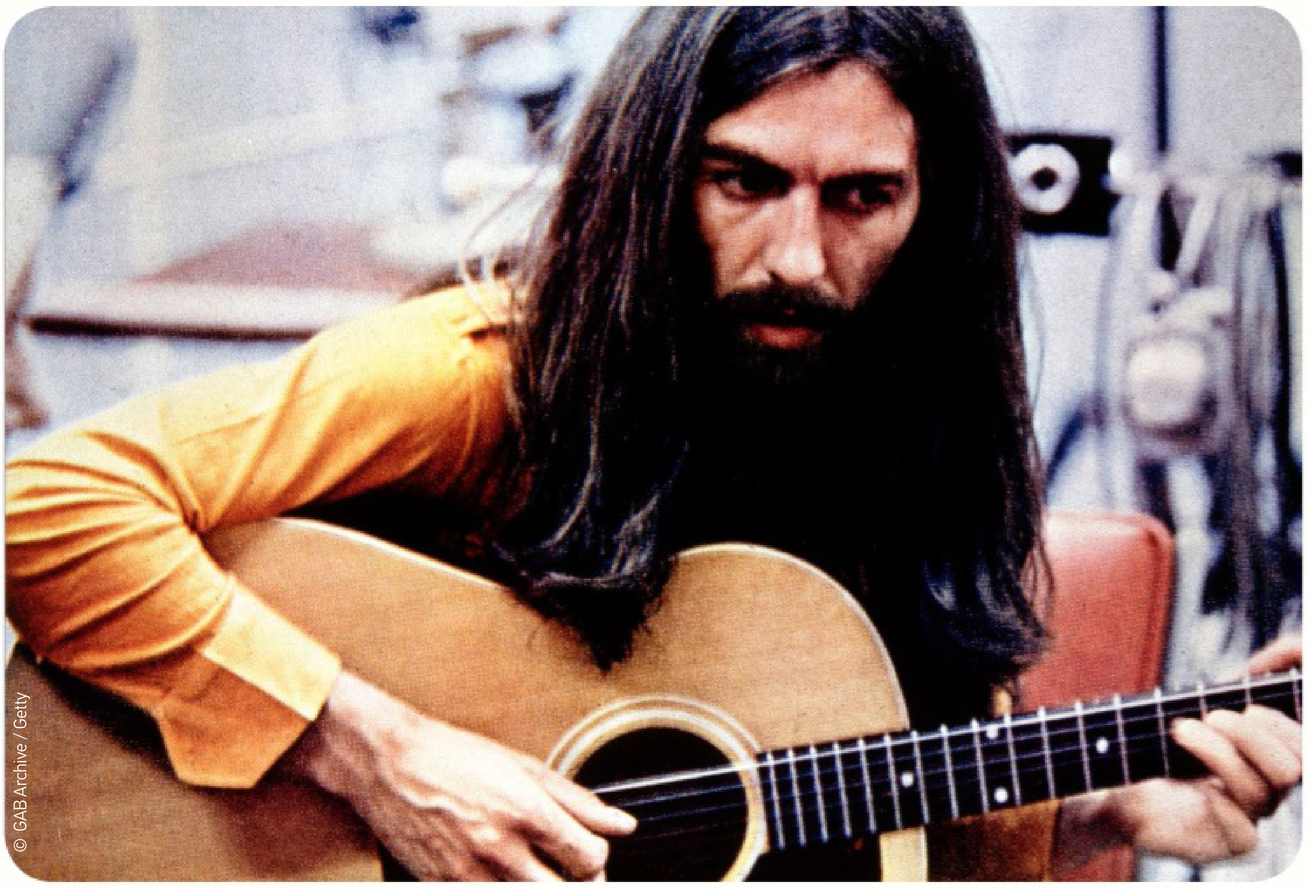
But it was during the filming of 1965's *Help!* that Harrison became far more than a foil, playing sitar for the first time, pursuing it into cuts like *Within You Without You* and challenging his bandmates to push the envelope beyond their formative jangle-pop. For all that, it's the guitarist's simplest moments that resonate. The trilling folk of *Here Comes The Sun*. The choppy strut of *Taxman*. The supple string-bends of *Abbey Road's Something* – a song toasted by Frank Sinatra as "the greatest love song of the past 50 years" but mistakenly attributed by the crooner to Lennon/McCartney.

The Beatles' split barely broke his stride. Out of the blocks, Harrison's 1970 solo album *All Things Must Pass* was widely deemed the best of the post-Fab projects, while he was the impetus behind the following year's altruistic Concert For Bangladesh. Later, the guitarist was a vital cog in The Traveling Wilburys and even mobilised the cream of British cinema, having founded HandMade Films to bail out Monty Python and fund 1979's *The Life Of Brian*.

Even when misfortune came calling – when he was stabbed by an intruder in 1999, and later when he succumbed to lung cancer in the post-millennium – Harrison bore it with his usual stoicism. "He never flinched," said the guitarist's son, Dhani. "He never felt sorry for himself. He never lost his sense of humour."

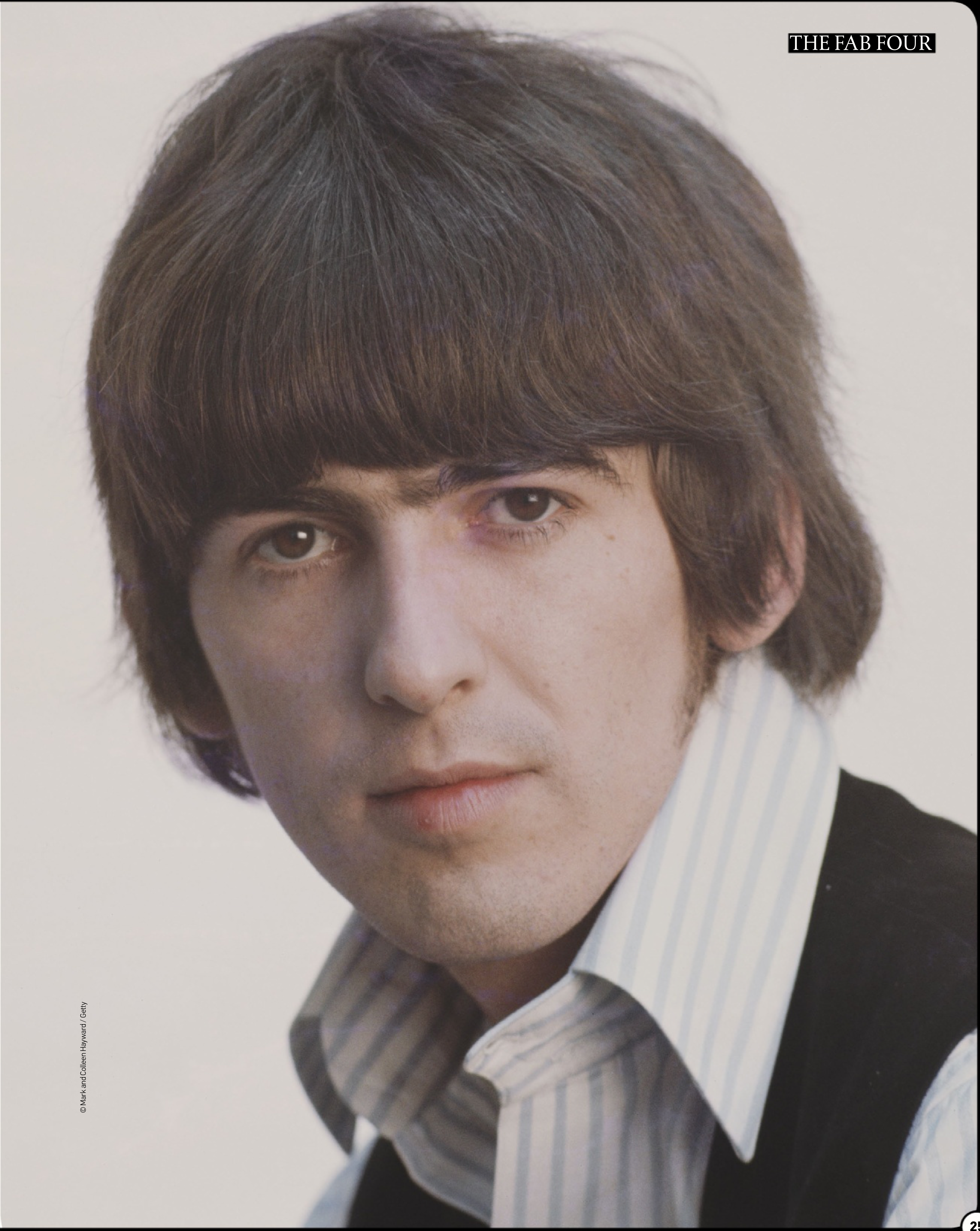
RIGHT: "I had no ambition when I was a kid other than to play guitar and get in a rock 'n' roll band. I don't really like to be the guy in the white suit at the front… "

BELOW: George was the first solo Beatle to have both a #1 single (*My Sweet Lord*) and album (*All Things Must Pass*)



"I DON'T REALLY LIKE TO BE THE GUY IN THE WHITE SUIT AT THE FRONT"

GEORGE HARRISON



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RINGO STARR

Far from a spare part, the drummer was The Beatles' blue-collar hero and underrated engine-room

It's easy to dismiss Ringo Starr as the passenger in The Beatles lineup. His original songs were infrequent and mostly forgettable. His vocal performances were reserved for the band's most frivolous and throwaway moments. Even his drum skills were negligible – at least according to John Lennon's apocryphal response when asked by a journalist if Starr was the best drummer in the world ("He's not even the best drummer in The Beatles"), something many believe he didn't say.

It's true that The Beatles might still have functioned without Starr in a way they patently couldn't if any of the other three members were removed. But Ringo was about more than just music. He was the wit-and-grit presence that kept the band tied to the streets as their lives threatened to float away from reality, the blue-collar boy-done-good who was emblematic of the rock 'n' roll dream and an eternally underrated musician who always knew exactly what the material demanded. "I've always believed," he once said, "that the drummer is there not to interrupt the song."

Born on 7th July 1940 in the tough inner-city environs of Dingle, Liverpool, Richard Starkey's musical talent was only unlocked after a teenage bout of TB ("A woman came to the hospital with instruments," he told *Mojo*. "Tambourines, maracas, snare drums – that's where it all started.")

A month after being presented with his first kit, he hit the local circuit in outfits like Rory Storm And The Hurricanes, but it was slipping onto The Beatles drumstool vacated by Pete Best that changed everything, both for Starkey – now Starr – and drummers that followed. Where once the drummer had been an invisible pace-setter, Starr insisted on being front and centre. "The reason I had a drum riser and also the smallest kit," he said, "was I was going to make damn sure you could see me."

© Denise Truscello / Getty

"MY SOUL IS THAT OF A DRUMMER…"

RINGO STAR

And whatever Lennon might have said, Starr was a far more talented sticksman than the old jokes suggested, every bit as perfect for his band as Keith Moon in The Who or John Bonham in Led Zeppelin. True, his post-Beatles career is largely kept afloat by goodwill, but his greatest moments echo through the ages. Take the thrilling solo from *The End*, the propulsive tom roll that opens *She Loves You* or, above all, the languorous fills on *A Day In The Life*.

"You could take a great drummer now and say, 'I want it like that'," noted fellow drummer Phil Collins, "and they wouldn't know what to do. I think Ringo's vastly underrated…"

ABOVE: Ringo continues to tour with his supergroup, the All-Starr Band, which first formed in 1989

LEFT: "First and foremost, I'm a drummer… My soul is that of a drummer… I didn't do it to become rich and famous, I did it because it was the love of my life"

THE FIFTH MAN

The key individuals in the Fab Four's orbit who have all, at some time or other, been dubbed 'the fifth Beatle'

Sift through any biography of The Beatles and the chances are that at some point there will be a reference to 'the fifth Beatle'. It's a phrase first coined by the media at the advent of Beatlemania in late 1963, and it's one that over six decades on shows little sign of waning.

The 'fifth Beatle' refers to any individual whose skills were pivotal to the band's trajectory, someone who was trusted and attuned to the band's sensibilities, their ambitions, John Lennon's sometimes caustic comments and their idiosyncratic wit. In the course of the band's eight-year existence and beyond, there are a number of key people who have been referred to as 'the fifth Beatle'. Here are the main contenders for the title...

RIGHT: The band pose with producer George Martin, holding their first silver disc awarded for *Please Please Me*

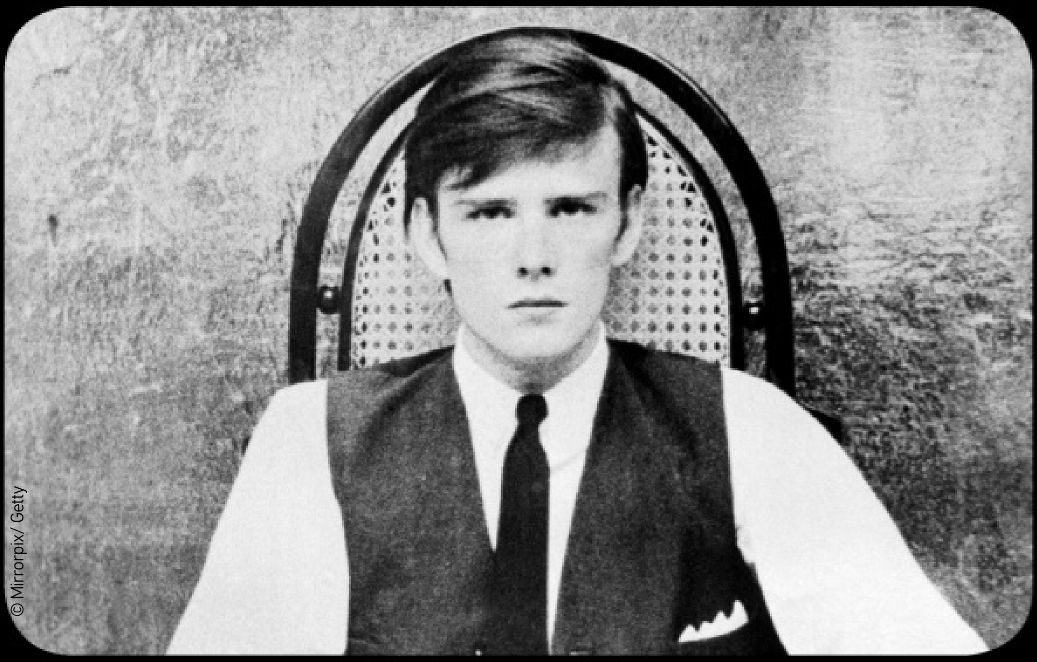
> "WE DIDN'T HAVE THE PUSH TO DO IT ON OUR OWN"
>
> JOHN LENNON

© Michael Ochs Archives / Stringer / Getty

STUART SUTCLIFFE

Sutcliffe was there from the very beginning. It was he and Lennon who came up with the name 'The Beatles' in Lennon's flat at Gambier Terrace in early 1960. A prodigiously talented painter, he was less gifted on bass than on canvas, but Lennon wanted him in the band so he stuck at it.

Sutcliffe was the most striking looking member, a fact not lost on photographer Astrid Kirchherr. She and Sutcliffe became engaged and he left The Beatles in 1961 to enrol at art school in Hamburg. But on 10th April 1962, Sutcliffe collapsed and died from a brain haemorrhage. He was just 21 years old. His close bond with Lennon and his seminal influence on the band have prompted many to refer to him as the fifth Beatle.



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BRIAN EPSTEIN

"If anyone was the fifth Beatle it was Brian," said Paul McCartney in 1997, and there seems little doubt that, without the charm, vision and all-round business acumen of their impeccably attired manager, the band would have floundered in obscurity. "If he hadn't gone to London... from place to place with the tapes under his arm, we would never have made it," said John Lennon. "We didn't have the push to do it on our own."

Epstein worked relentlessly to get the band signed and then transformed them into a global phenomenon. Socially and culturally, the manager and his four charges were lightyears apart, but his business was respected in Liverpool, and there was a mutual respect and trust.

"Brian was class," recalled McCartney in Ron Howard's documentary *Eight Days A Week*. "He was Liverpool class. In the early days it was clear he had a vision of us that was beyond the vision that we had of ourselves."

GEORGE MARTIN

The gifted producer and arranger who helped The Beatles to realise their creative visions was largely underwhelmed by the band at their first recording session in Abbey Road Studios on 6th June 1962. But he was impressed by their wit. When he asked the band if there was anything they didn't like, George Harrison replied, "Well, there's your tie, for a start." So began one of the music industry's most fruitful creative alliances ever.

While McCartney had referred to Epstein as the fifth Beatle in 1997, he clearly felt George Martin merited the title too. "He guided the career of The Beatles with such skill and good humour," he wrote in a tribute in *The Guardian* following the death of Martin in 2016. "If anyone earned the title of the fifth Beatle it was George."

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Aspinall (right) standing in for a bedridden Harrison during a rehearsal for a TV performance in 1964

NEIL ASPINALL

At The Beatles' 1988 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, George Harrison said there were only two 'fifth Beatles' – their public relations manager Derek Taylor and the band's road manager-turned-Apple Corps executive, Neil Aspinall.

Aspinall started working as the band's road manager in the early 60s, driving them around the UK in his Commer van before becoming their tour manager. In 1968, following the death of Brian Epstein, Aspinall – who had trained as an accountant – was appointed head of Apple Corps, a role he continued until 2007, a year before his death. The appointment of Aspinall was an astute one, and McCartney praised him particularly for having the foresight to trademark the Apple name worldwide.

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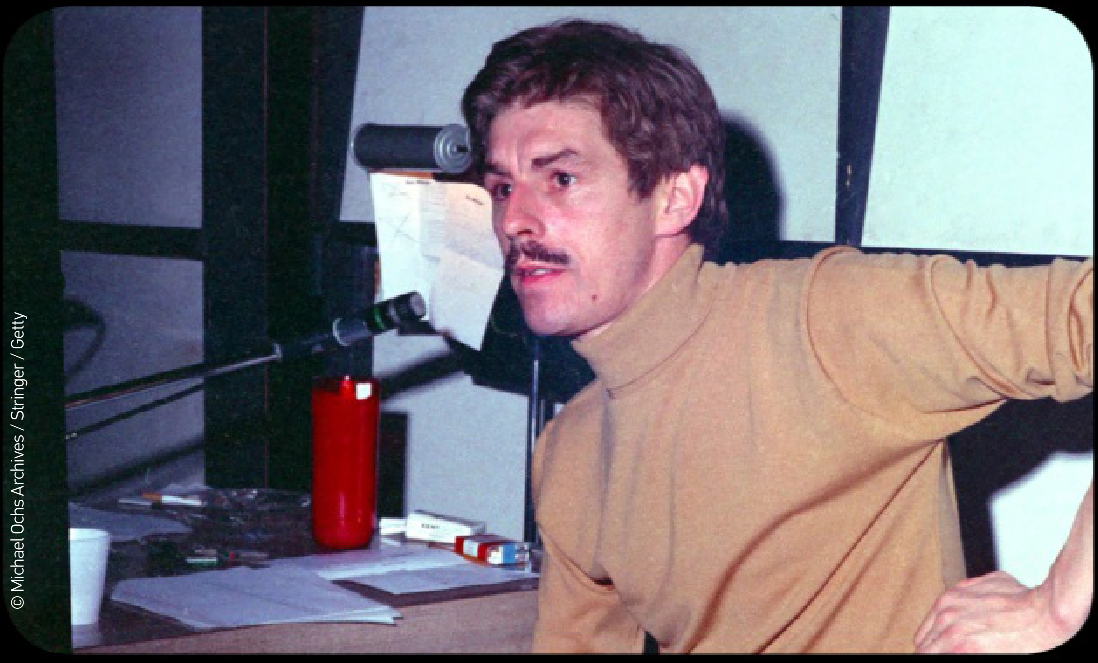
DEREK TAYLOR

Calm, authoritative and effortlessly cool, The Beatles' press officer Derek Taylor brought a sense of order and dignity to the chaos that surrounded the world's biggest band.

Wirral-born Taylor was press officer on their US concert tour in summer 1964 but left following a row with Brian Epstein. In 1965 he moved to California, where he worked for The Byrds and The Beach Boys. In April 1968, at George Harrison's request, he returned to the UK to work as press officer for the newly founded Apple Corps. Taylor left in 1970 but returned two decades later as head of marketing for Apple Corps. A highly respected industry figure, he was, as one writer put it, "one of the very few men to perfect the art of saying 'no' graciously".



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Best, second from left, was replaced by Ringo in 1962

© Hulton Archive / Stringer / Getty

PETE BEST

Poor Pete Best, turfed out of the nascent band and then forced to watch as they became one of the biggest cultural phenomenons that the world has ever seen. It was producer George Martin who first highlighted his perceived shortfalls as a drummer, although it seems he was always on borrowed time from the band's perspective anyway. "We were always going to dump him when we found a decent drummer," said Lennon in a 1974 interview, although they left it to manager Brian Epstein to break the news to Best. "He said, 'The boys want you out and Ringo in'," recalled Best. "It was a complete bombshell. I was stunned." Following his shock removal from the band, Best went on to form his own, The Pete Best Four. After a 20-year career in the civil service he returned to music, forming The Pete Best Band in 1988.

THE IDEAS FACTORY

Abbey Road was The Beatles' creative playground, and the backdrop to their dizzy rise and bitter fall. Here's how a recording studio became so much more...

On 6th June 1962, four unknown scruffs from Liverpool tramped into an elegant Georgian townhouse in North London. As Paul McCartney reflected in a recent TV interview, Abbey Road Studios – or EMI Recording Studios, as it was then known – didn't roll out the red carpet when the fledgling Beatles arrived to audition for the record label in Studio Two.

"I remember the very first day we walked into Abbey Road as four twenty-something boys. We came in the tradesman's entrance, because we weren't allowed to come through the control room, that was for the grown-ups. So we came in, like, 'Wow, a studio'. And George had a black eye, because he'd got smacked by some guy at The Cavern the week before."

Since its grand opening in November 1931, Abbey Road Studios has taken the pulse of a thousand music scenes and hosted a shuttle-run of rock legends. Scan the studio annals and you'll find a pan-generational who's who: The Shadows, Pink Floyd, U2, Oasis, Amy Winehouse, George Ezra. Yet one band looms over the folklore.

In an untouchable hot streak between 1962 and 1969, this was where The Beatles recorded 190 of their 210 songs; rewrote the rulebook of studio production; stretched the possibilities of pop music; fought and reconciled; smoked, bantered and hid from the world. For seven years – and more sporadically for the half-century after their 1970 split – Abbey Road was the band's home, playground and fortress. These four walls were the backdrop to their lives, from the greatest creative triumphs to the most desperate personal lows

But for a heartbeat in 1963, as the wide-eyed line-up of Paul McCartney, John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr arrived to track debut album *Please Please Me*, The Beatles were just

"[WE WERE] NERVOUS, NAÏVE AND LOOKING FOR SUCCESS"

GEORGE HARRISON

© Jeff Gilbert / Alamy Stock Photo

another band, keenly aware of the ticking clock and the punitive cost of wasting time in this cutting-edge studio, never questioning the wisdom of producer George Martin. "We'd started out like anyone spending their first time in a studio," Harrison noted. "Nervous and naïve and looking for success."

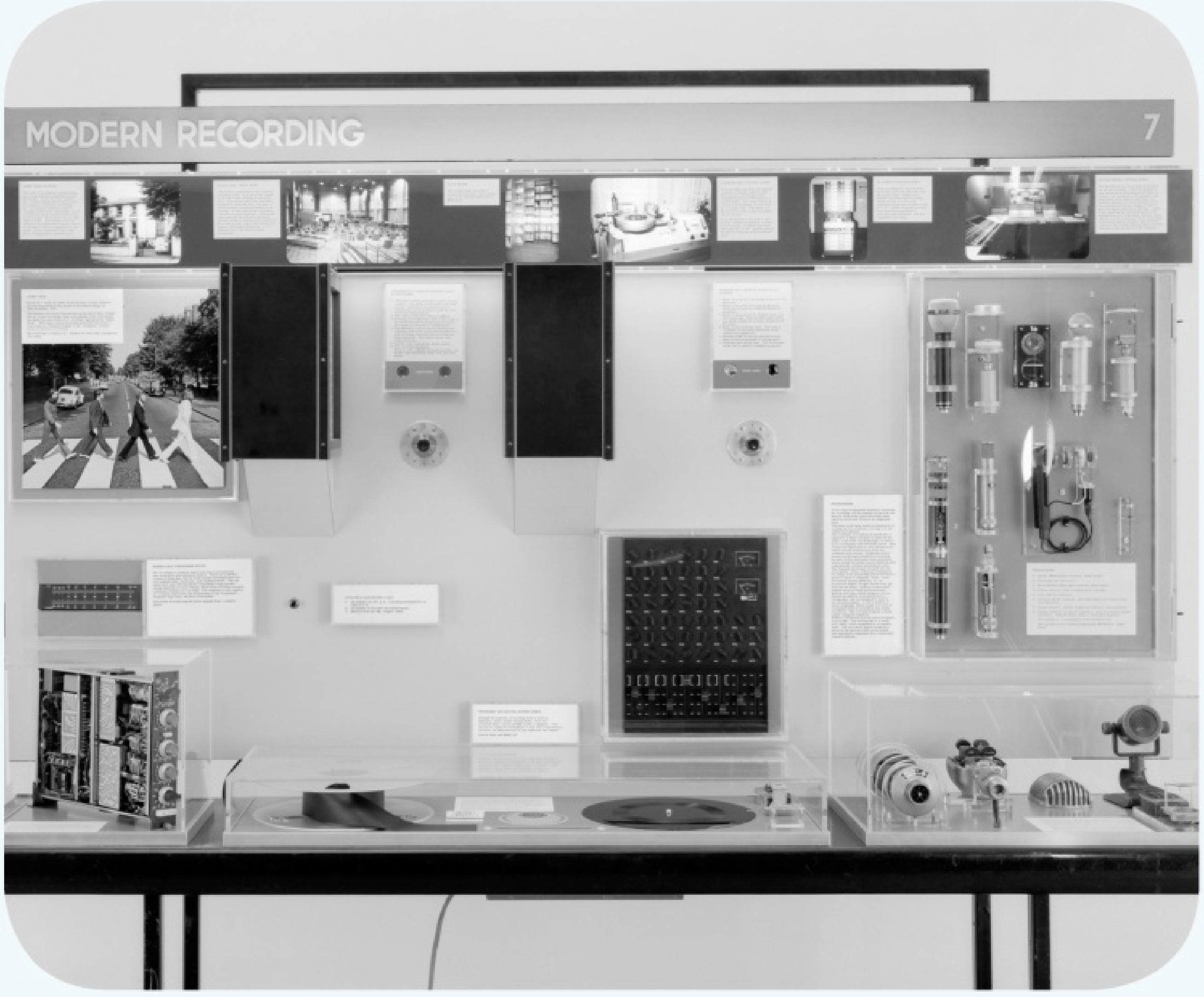
"It was a very cold morning, and I didn't know any of them," remembered tape operative Richard Langham of that first encounter. "I actually had to ask Norman Smith, who was the engineer: 'Who are they?'"

Please Please Me took just 12 hours to track and cost a mere £400, with Martin adding minimal spit and polish to what was fundamentally the band's live set. By the time they wrapped this marathon session with a cover of *Twist And Shout*, Lennon's throat was so raw he was forced to gargle milk from the studio canteen. It was an inauspicious start. But the breakout success of that album – which topped the UK album chart for 30 weeks upon its 1963 release – transformed the band's relationship with Abbey Road. As EMI recognised the phenomenon on their hands, the label gave The Beatles limitless breathing space, and the band's modus operandi quickly evolved from bash-it-out urgency to experimental carte-blanche.

The clock-watching stopped as the blue-sky thinking took hold. By 1964's *Beatles For Sale*, the band were exploring the studio's trailblazing four-track technology and dabbling with effects that ranged from the shimmering fade-in of *Eight Days A Week* to the reverb-soaked double-tracking of *No Reply*. On 1965's *Rubber Soul,* Martin ceded control to the band as they manipulated tape speeds to create the harpsichord effect on *In My Life*.

On the following year's *Revolver,* they dived into automatic double tracking and tore up the rulebook on the deeply trippy *Tomorrow Never Knows*. "It is the one track, of all the songs The Beatles did, that could never be reproduced," noted Martin of the sonic collage that stirred in everything from tape loops to Leslie speakers.

ABOVE: The Beatles' mixing desk overlooking Abbey Road's Studio One at the Abbey Road Studios



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With the band now using Abbey Road Studios as something between an instrument and a mad laboratory, no creative demand was too outlandish. "One time," reflects engineer Ken Scott, "John said he wasn't feeling it, we had to keep moving around the studio, trying different vibrations. I pointed to a small room in the corner and said, 'The way you guys are going, you'll want to record in there next'. Next thing I knew, he'd decided he wanted to. We had to squeeze them all in there somehow, instruments and all. You had to be careful what you said to The Beatles."

If the walls of Abbey Road Studios could talk, they'd tell the greatest stories in rock 'n' roll. It's hard to imagine a sweeter moment, for instance, than the Our World event of June 1967, when The Beatles filled Studio One with flowers and celebrity fans, airing *All You Need Is Love* for the world's first live satellite TV production. With an estimated global audience of 700 million, Abbey Road felt like the epicentre of the Summer of Love. "It's a standard thing that people do now," Starr reflected. "But then, when we did it, it was a first. That was exciting – we were doing a lot of firsts."

But the atmosphere wasn't always so harmonious, with the studio feeling more like a gilded cage or pressure cooker in later years. If The Beatles had once been a united force – usually assembling in their preferred Studio Two – then by 1968's *White Album*, they had fractured, with each musician commandeering a section of the building and holding furtive sessions without the others.

Tales of bad blood trickled from Abbey Road. There was the time the band clashed with Starr over a drum fill on *Back In The U.S.S.R.*, then festooned his kit with flowers to coax him back into the studio. The time Lennon bit at engineer Geoff Emerick over the guitar tone on *Revolution 1* ("It's your job to control it," the Beatle snapped, "so just do your job"). Most terminal of all, perhaps, was the day in May 1968 when Lennon invited his

TOP: Some of the innovative recording equipment used at the Abbey Road Studios during The Beatles era was exhibited at the Science Museum in 1978

LEFT: Paul pictured in Studio One with the orchestra as they record the overdubs of *A Day In The Life* for *Sgt. Pepper*, on 10th February 1967

© Terry O'Neill / Getty

© Phil Dent / Getty

divisive new girlfriend, Yoko Ono, into the studio, so breaking the unspoken rule that partners were not party to the creative process. "For the next couple of hours, Ono just sat quietly with us in the control room," recalled Emerick. "It had to have been even more uncomfortable for her than it was for us."

After a rollercoaster seven years, the band's love affair with Abbey Road was cooling. On 20th August 1969 – less than a fortnight after they'd marched across the zebra crossing for the sleeve of that year's *Abbey Road* album – the four members worked together in the North London studio

TOP: George Harrison tunes up for a recording session of *She Loves You* in Studio Two, on 1st July 1963

ABOVE: The famous Studio Two, where The Beatles made the majority of their albums

© Larry Ellis / Stringer

for the last time, completing a mix of *I Want You (She's So Heavy)*. But even then, as the four-piece scattered into their solo careers, they couldn't stay away. From Harrison's *All Things Must Pass* to Starr's *Sentimental Journey* – along with too many McCartney solo projects to count – Abbey Road has exerted an irresistible pull on both the individual Beatles and the bands that followed. No doubt, the studio's enduring popularity is partly down to its tech spec and production team. But equally, it's the residual love, magic and folklore that still hums in these walls. "It's always great to go back to Abbey Road," considers McCartney. "First of all, it's a great studio, still. But for me, it's a nostalgia trip…"

LEFT: Ringo and George arriving at the studios in November 1966, when the band were recording *Sgt. Pepper*

BELOW: Whereas previously the band tended to leave their personal lives at the studio doors, Yoko Ono's presence at Abbey Road became a source of tension

RIGHT: John, Ringo and Paul playing pianos in the studio, circa 1967

"IT'S ALWAYS GREAT TO GO BACK TO ABBEY ROAD"

PAUL McCARTNEY

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OUR WORLD

Performing *All You Need Is Love* at Abbey Road for the first live international satellite television broadcast in 1967

© Michael Ochs Archives / Stringer / Getty

A

A-SIDE: ABBEY ROAD

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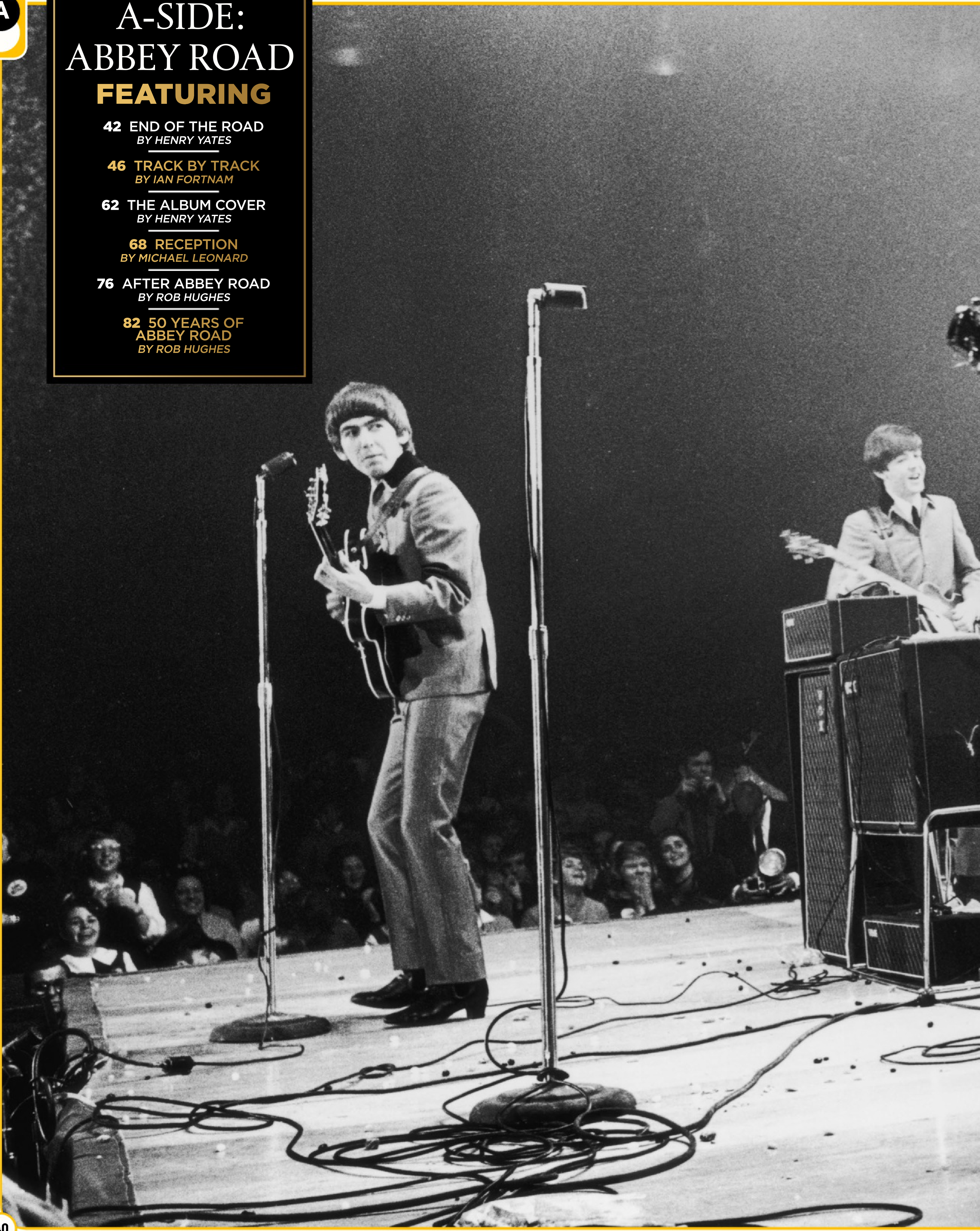

END OF THE ROAD

The Beatles' last stand was perhaps their finest hour. Here's how John, Paul, George and Ringo came together, one final time, for the classic Abbey Road album...

It was the summer of 1969, and as they embarked on *Abbey Road*, The Beatles were hanging by a thread. Following the clashes of the previous year's *The White Album* – and the venom of the *Let It Be* sessions – this 11th album represented the line-up's unspoken last stand, a chance to either reignite the spark and bonhomie of the early years, or establish that a split was inevitable. In retrospect, *Abbey Road* did both of these things: the album stands among the dizzy peaks of the band's studio catalogue, but its creation also confirmed that nothing could save The Beatles now.

From the moment work began on 22nd February 1969, *Abbey Road* was a melting pot of musical styles and a tug-of-war of opinion. From Paul McCartney's viewpoint, this latest album was a bid to hit reset on the band, to make a record "the way we used to do it", in contrast to the cut-and-paste sonic odysseys of *Revolution 9* and *Tomorrow Never Knows*. "I thought we were through [after *Let It Be*]," recalled George Martin in *Rolling Stone*. "I wasn't happy and I didn't want to go on. And I was very surprised when they came back to me afterward and said, 'Look, let's try and get back the way we

RIGHT: The world-famous zebra crossing outside Abbey Road Studios has become a mecca for Beatles fans

© Brian Rasic/ Getty

were in the old days. Will you really produce the next album for us?' Which became *Abbey Road*."

Wary of a return to the pitched battles of *Let It Be*, Martin insisted on better discipline from his charges, but while the animosity was less overt, engineer Alan Parsons recalled an unravelling line-up. "It was the final album, and you could tell there was a little bit of conflict going on between the four band members. They were mostly working as individuals. Once the basic tracks were done, all the overdubs and vocals tended to be done by the Beatle who had written the song. They weren't often seen together after the initial stages, which kind of pointed towards the breakup."

Perhaps the biggest point of contention was the medley that sprawled across almost the entire second half of *Abbey Road*: a concept that McCartney championed but Lennon scorned: "I liked the 'A' side but I never liked that sort of pop opera on the other side," he told *Rolling Stone* in January 1971. "I think it's junk, because it was just bits of songs thrown together."

While George Harrison would reflect that "it felt as if we were reaching the end of the line", you wouldn't have guessed it from the music. Released on 26th September 1969, *Abbey Road* flew to the top of the US and UK charts and sold four million copies in just two months. Despite the band's ambivalence – and Lennon's caustic views on the album as a whole – these were songs that fizzed with vitality,

© Getty images

"WE DID ACTUALLY PERFORM LIKE MUSICIANS AGAIN"

GEORGE HARRISON

invention and a chemistry that rivalled the nose-to-nose days of the Star Club in Hamburg. Even Harrison admitted: "We did actually perform like musicians again."

There was the shudder and shuffle of *Come Together*. The weeping guitar lines of Harrison's career-best *Something*. The ominous cycling riff of *I Want You (She's So Heavy)*, contrasted by the sweet strum of *Here Comes The Sun*. Even now, 50 years later, the heart still races when *Golden Slumbers* blooms into *Carry That Weight*: one of many gearshifts in the Side B medley that left songwriters trailing in Lennon and McCartney's wake. "A lot of work went into that," recalled Starr, whose drum solo at the start of *The End* was perhaps his greatest moment on record. "That last section is, for me, one of the best things we ever did."

Factor in the indelible image of the sleeve art – with all four Beatles striding across the zebra crossing outside the studio – and *Abbey Road* was one of the most satisfying records The Beatles ever produced: more cohesive than *The White Album*, less overplayed and patchy than *Sgt. Pepper*. All they needed was a title. "We were in the studio downstairs putting finishing touches to the album," reflected McCartney in a CBS interview. "And we had another title going on that we didn't really like. So I just said, 'Hey, why don't we just call it *Abbey Road*?' And everyone agreed."

The timeline will tell you that 1970's *Let It Be* was the last Beatles album ever released – but most fans would argue that 1969's *Abbey Road* is more deserving of swansong status. It's not only the superior album, far worthier of tying a bow on the astonishing career of history's all-time-greatest band. But it also marked the final coming-together of all four members, who would never set foot in the same studio again after completing the mix of *I Want You (She's So Heavy)* on 20th August 1969. To borrow the title and closing line of *Abbey Road*'s penultimate track, this was the end, The Beatles making and taking more love than any other band in history.

LEFT: *Abbey Road* was effectively the end of the Fab Four

BELOW: Producer George Martin (second from right) said, "[*Abbey Road*] was a very, very happy album. Everybody worked frightfully well and that's why I'm very fond of it"

© Michael Ochs Archives / Stringer / Getty images

SIDE ONE: TRACK BY TRACK

© Keystone Features / Stringer / Getty

TRACK 1

COME TOGETHER

Very much John Lennon's song, *Abbey Road*'s opener started out as *Let's Get It Together,* a campaign song for Timothy Leary, standing against Ronald Reagan for Governor of California. Lennon kickstarted his lyric with a phrase from Chuck Berry's *You Can't Catch Me* ('Here come old flat-top'), but neglected to cut the line from the finished recording. Berry's publishers initiated plagiarism proceedings but settled out of court in 1973 on condition Lennon record three of their songs (hence 1975's *Rock 'N' Roll* album). With a thinly-veiled Lennon as central protagonist, *Come Together* is a groove-based espousal of the counter-culture, rich in self-confessed 'gobbledygook', that references Yoko Ono (then recovering from a car accident in a hospital bed actually located in Abbey Road Studios) and features the zeitgeist-defining line 'you got to be free'. Recorded across nine days in July, all four Beatles featured, with Lennon on double-tracked guitar solo, McCartney bass and piano, and Ringo shuffling beautifully on juju drums. Outwardly good-natured, there was tension in the air. "Shoot me" Lennon whispered over the opening bars, while McCartney told Ray Coleman: "On *Come Together* I'd have liked to have sung harmony with John, and I think he'd have liked me to, but I was too embarrassed to ask him."

ABOVE: John, George and Paul recording voices for the *Yellow Submarine* cartoon in 1968

RIGHT: Side One of *Abbey Road*, featuring the Apple logo

"I SAID 'GIVE ME SOMETHING FUNKY AND SET UP A BEAT…' AND THEY ALL JUST JOINED IN"

JOHN LENNON ON *COME TOGETHER*

© JMarc Tielemans / Alamy Stock Photo

TRACK 2

SOMETHING

George Harrison didn't make many dents in Lennon and McCartney's songwriting predominance, but when he did, he made them count. First worked on during The Beatles' sessions, *Something* – with Harrison taking double-tracked lead vocal and delivering a soaring complementary guitar solo to die for – was his masterpiece. Lennon added piano and a four-minute extended instrumental coda (ultimately shelved but for a small snippet in the middle-eight), while McCartney's over-busy bass vied – perhaps jealously – for attention. With a suggestion of Hammond from Billy Preston, *Something* was released as a double A-side (with *Come Together*) as *Abbey Road*'s sole single. Second only to *Yesterday* as the most covered song in The Beatles' catalogue, both Lennon and McCartney admitted it was the best track on the album and Frank Sinatra, who regularly performed it, rated *Something* as "the greatest love song ever written", if slightly souring the compliment by mis-crediting its composition to Lennon/McCartney.

James Taylor's eponymous debut album, issued by Apple the previous year, featured the track *Something In The The Way She Moves*, though Harrison's misappropriation of its titular opening line didn't concern a selfless Taylor: "I was pleased to think that I'd had an impact on The Beatles."

© Mark and Colleen Hayward / Getty

ABOVE: The band during a party photoshoot to promote the BBC World Service in 1964

RIGHT: George Harrison's *Something* is one of the most widely covered Beatles tracks

© Ed Caraeff / Morgan Media / Getty

© CBS Photo Archive / Getty

TRACK 3

MAXWELL'S SILVER HAMMER

When it comes to bones of contention between Lennon and McCartney, *Maxwell's Silver Hammer* is a veritable skeleton. McCartney began working on the song in early '68, while the band were still in Rishikesh, India, with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Outwardly, a jaunty music hall number, its lyric (inspired by French symbolist writer Alfred Jarry – hence McCartney's deployment of Jarry's word 'pataphysical' in its opening line) told of medical student Maxwell Edison's predilection for mass murder. Yet while McCartney believed implicitly in his macabre composition's hit potential, driving the band to distraction (with the exception of the absent Lennon, who hated this latest example of what he disparagingly referred to as "Paul's granny music") as he attempted to deliver a definitive version over gruelling sessions in July 1969, his fellow Beatles were less than enthusiastic. As successive takes ground on, Harrison told McCartney: "You've taken three days. It's only a song." According to Starr: "It was the worst track we ever had to record." George Martin added an organ, McCartney a Moog solo and Mal Evans fatal anvil blows, yet despite the accolade of a Peter Glaze *Crackerjack* pastiche, *Maxwell's Silver Hammer* never became the hit single McCartney hoped for.

TRACK 4

OH! DARLING

Possibly inspired by Frank Zappa's sentimentally retrogressive Doo-Wop experiments on *Cruising With Ruben And The Jets*, McCartney similarly returned to the previous decade for *Oh! Darling*. It was a canny combination of traditional rock 'n' roll tropes, blues-rooted, Louisiana swamp pop and close harmony vocals, ultimately overwhelmed in the final mix by a lead vocal in thrall of Little Richard. McCartney grafted to nail exactly the right performance, arriving early into Abbey Road, warming his voice up over understated preparatory takes before finally letting rip in pursuit of the kind of raw perfection he'd routinely nail after three hours behind the microphone in Hamburg. John Lennon's piano hammered a complementary Fats Domino accompaniment, but by this stage, the tension was never far from the surface. The effortless box-fresh Paul McCartney of '63 had matured, and when particularly impassioned in '69 sounded ever-so-slightly laboured, a state of affairs that Lennon gleefully highlighted: "*Oh! Darling* was a great one of Paul's that he didn't sing too well. I always thought I could have done it better – it was more my style than his." Ouch. Though he might have had a point. Caught on the right night, Lennon (still a wannabe Ted at heart) was still muscular rock 'n' roll's finest vocal exponent.

ABOVE: In an interview, John later commented that he would have done a better job on the vocals for *Oh! Darling* than Paul. "If he had any sense, he should have let me sing it [laughs]"

© Bettmann / Getty

"IT'S ONLY THE SECOND SONG RINGO WROTE… IT'S LOVELY"

GEORGE HARRISON ON *OCTOPUS'S GARDEN*

TRACK 5

OCTOPUS'S GARDEN

In August '68, following an argument with Paul McCartney over *Back In The U.S.S.R.*'s drum part, Ringo Starr temporarily 'left' The Beatles and headed to Sardinia for a family holiday. While bobbing about the Mediterranean on Peter Sellers' yacht he ordered fish and chips, but was presented with squid and chips. While tucking into the unfortunate cephalopod's 'rubbery' charms, the ship's captain informed him that octopuses collect stones and shells whilst patrolling the sea bed and construct underwater gardens. Eager to escape the bickering of his band mates, Starr found solace in songwriting and delivered *Octopus's Garden* (his second solo composition for the band after *Don't Pass Me By* with roots similarly set in country and western). *Octopus's Garden* was refined by Starr alongside George Harrison upon his return to Abbey Road during the *Get Back* sessions, and perfected (with Chris Thomas engineering in the absence of George Martin), with the entire band reunited and self-producing, during July '69. An inoffensive nursery ditty that featured a characteristically lugubrious lead vocal from Starr and undersea sound effects from McCartney – bubbling through a straw into a glass of milk, *Octopus's Garden* has been called, accurately if uncharitably, "a poor man's *Yellow Submarine*."

TRACK 6

I WANT YOU (SHE'S SO HEAVY)

The first song initiated for *Abbey Road*, was one of the last completed, *I Want You (She's So Heavy)* was the longest track the quartet recorded (save for musique concrète sound collage *Revolution 9*), longer even than *Hey Jude*. *I Want You*'s composition saw John Lennon not so much smitten with Yoko Ono as completely obsessed and its twelve-word lyric nags undeniably. "I want you, I want you so bad, it's driving me mad" an insistent circular repetition asserts, resignation turns to desperation as riffs echo support, before the awestruck admission "She's so heavy." Jaunty Bossa Nova lightens the mood post-chorus (highlighting Ringo's casual excellence across an itchy stop-start rhythm bed), prior to an extraordinary three-minute coda of apposite heaviness. In recognition of Ono's avant-garde background, Lennon bolstered the song's extended conclusion (ultimately cut dead into silence) with a synth-wash of white noise. The track clearly engaged the dissolute band, providing their final hurrah as an airtight ensemble: Harrison bolstering the circular riff's might, McCartney playing out of his skin and Starr operating a wind machine over the final mesmerising tumult. With Billy Preston's presence (on Hammond) ensuring a veneer of in-band courtesy *I Want You (She's So Heavy)* captured latter-period Beatles at their best.

© Keystone-France / Getty

LEFT: The band pictured in 1964 playing in the sea on Miami Beach during their first US tour

ABOVE: McCartney had his first ideas for *Maxwell's Silver Hammer* while the band were at the ashram in Rishikesh

A

AT THE ASHRAM

Several *Abbey Road* tracks were written during the band's stay at the ashram of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (centre) in 1968

© Hulton Archive / Getty

SIDE TWO: TRACK BY TRACK

ABOVE: Bronze statues of the band, created by sculptor Andy Edwards, were unveiled at the Liverpool waterfront in 2015

TRACK 1
HERE COMES THE SUN

During April 1969, London's meteorological stations registered more sunlight hours than during any other month of the Sixties, and during this month George Harrison decided to "sag off" yet another Apple business meeting with "dopey accountants" to spend the day truanting in the garden of Eric Clapton's house in Ewhurst, Surrey. These were the circumstances under which Harrison conjured up *Here Comes The Sun* on a borrowed acoustic guitar. The brightly beaming hopeful light to *I Want You (She's So Heavy)*'s ultimately oppressive shade, *Here Comes The Sun* represented the relief and optimism Harrison felt when removed from the grind of The Beatles' business machinations and ever more incessant infighting. By the time its outwardly straightforward (if slightly complicated by Indian influence) chords made it into the studio in early July, John Lennon was absent following the same car crash that would ultimately confine Yoko Ono to her previously mentioned Abbey Road Studios bed for the duration, so Harrison's bright arpeggiated triads and gently wavering Moog only found McCartney's bass and Starr's drums in support. The song's simplistic positivity proved to be just as infectious as it was tangible, and when it was covered by Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel it hit Number 10 in the UK charts during the long hot summer of 1976.

TRACK 2
BECAUSE

With Lennon, McCartney and Harrison over-laying three sets of close vocal harmonies in order to achieve a nine-voice choral effect, as Starr gently tapped his hi-hat metronomically, Because was the last track that all four Beatles worked on from start to finish. Upon hearing Yoko Ono playing Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No.14* (more commonly known as *Moonlight Sonata*), a somewhat chemically enhanced Lennon had her play its chords backwards, and stumbled upon the melody that was to become *Because*. The opiated idealistic imagery of its lyric was meanwhile inspired, just as *Imagine* would be later, by Ono's 1964 conceptual art book *Grapefruit*. Beginning work on the first day of August, the band took 23 takes before nailing the ultimate backing track, with Lennon doubling up guitar lines with harpsichord, McCartney on bass, Harrison on upfront Moog and producer George Martin adding a suggestion of electric spinet to enhance a prevailing medieval feel. Once the vocals were added, with Studio 2's lights dimmed in a soothing haze of Harrison-provided incense, Because sounded more hymn than hit, as effective an accompaniment to floating away on the heroin high Lennon was contemporaneously chasing as Buffalo Springfield's *Expecting To Fly*. A month later? *Cold Turkey*.

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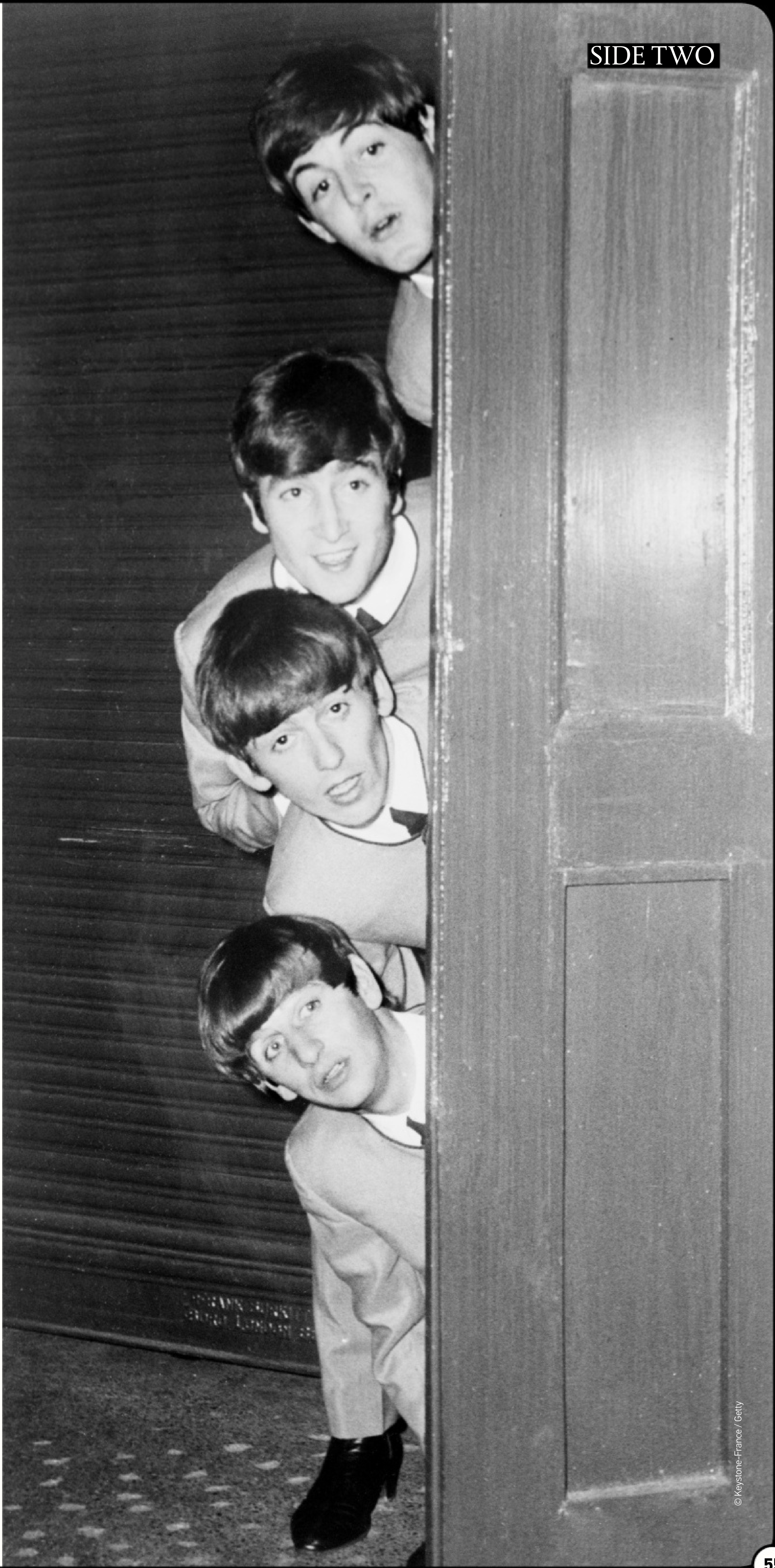

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ABOVE: Beatles fans gathering outside the band's hotel ahead of their concert in New York, August 1964. Paul's experience with some obsessive fans who broke into his London home is said to have inspired *She Came In Through The Bathroom Window*

RIGHT: A portrait of the band in London, 1965

TRACK 3
YOU NEVER GIVE ME YOUR MONEY

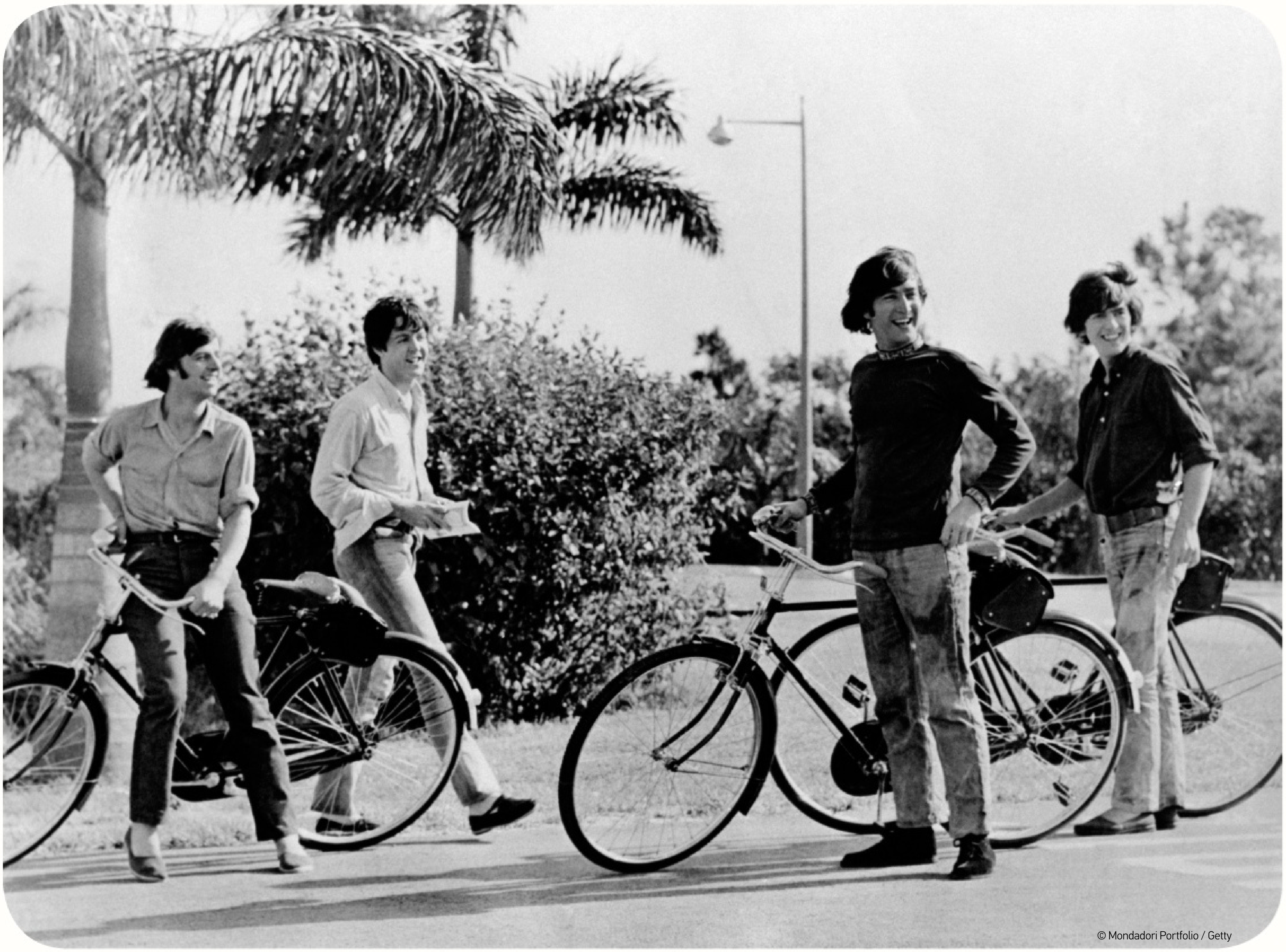
With The Beatles' journey approaching its conclusion – in messy public divorce driven by finance-based acrimony and Lennon and Harrison's desire to escape the constraints of the band and to find themselves as artists via autonomous solo careers – McCartney bowed to the inevitable. He was reluctant to give up on The Beatles, artistically speaking he was happy where he was and in no particular hurry to grow up, but if the end was nigh, he was determined the band should go out on a high. *Abbey Road*'s second side was to climax in an ambitious medley. Superficially, a multi-part song cycle appears to be a brave artistic endeavour: a magnum opus; practically speaking, it's an extremely effective method by which to sweep together a bunch of unfinished snippets – some of which had been hanging around since *The Beatles*' sessions – and rebrand them as your masterpiece. The medley's opening section, McCartney's *You Never Give Me Your Money* is similar in structure to Lennon's *Happiness Is A Warm Gun* and composed of five clear constituent parts. From its opening melancholic piano to its concluding *I Want You*-echoing guitar arpeggios, *...Money* is the 'long medley' in microcosm, a linear suite with, at its heart, a resigned McCartney plaintively intoning 'nowhere to go'.

TRACK 4
SUN KING

Opening with a sultry reverbed guitar, George Harrison admitted had been inspired by Fleetwood Mac's *Albatross*, John Lennon's *Sun King* (originally titled *Here Comes The Sun King*, but renamed to avoid any confusion with *Here Comes The Sun*) cross-fades up out of Paul McCartney's tacked-on wind-chime and tape-looped conclusion to *You*

BELOW: The band riding bikes while filming in the Bahamas for the feature film *Help!*

RIGHT: *You Never Give Me Your Money* was Paul's thinly veiled objections to Allen Klein's (left) influence and his handling of the band's finances



© Mondadori Portfolio / Getty

"THIS WAS ME DIRECTLY LAMBASTING ALLEN KLEIN… NO MONEY, JUST FUNNY PAPER, ALL PROMISES AND IT NEVER WORKS OUT"

PAUL McCARTNEY

Never Give Me Your Money. Recorded as a single sequential piece with *Mean Mr Mustard*, *Sun King* – evocative of a soporific dream-state – set five-part multi-tracked Lennon vocals gently adrift atop a languorous sound-bed of cymbal splashed Ringo bongos, meanderingly melodic McCartney bass, gently stereo-panning Harrison guitar and atmospherically inconspicuous George Martin Lowrey organ. 'Here comes the Sun King' intones a quintet of Beach Boys-informed John Lennons (all of whom had just read Nancy Mitford's autobiography of Louis XIV), before embarking upon a predictably inexplicable cod Iberian/Italian coda. 'Cuando para mucho, mi amore de felice corazon', "We just made up… Spanish words that sounded vaguely like something" Lennon revealed. 'Mundo paparazzi mi amore,' the patchwork pastiche continues, even throwing a hint of schoolyard Scouse 'chicka ferdy parasol' into an exotic word soup of surrealistic John speak.

TRACK 5
MEAN MR MUSTARD

Though decidedly slight in its duration, sizing up at just six seconds over a single minute, Lennon's *Mean Mr Mustard* (to all intents and purposes, the second half of *Sun King* and similarly derided by its author as: "a bit of crap I wrote in India") is an earworm of significant potency. Harking back to a character-based music hall jokiness more readily associated with '67's *Sgt. Pepper* era, *Mean Mr Mustard* jarred the unsuspecting listener out of *Sun King*'s comparatively tranquil sonic siesta. The central character, drawn in typically grotesque Lennon lyrics, was 'a dirty old man' who 'shaves in the dark' and 'kept a ten bob note up his nose' loosely based on a miser Lennon discovered in a newspaper report and fleshed-out with McCartney during their Rishikesh down-time. A snippet of an idea that, without being co-opted for the Long Medley might have languished on Abbey Road's cutting room floor until inevitably pressed into service as a 50th anniversary box-set bonus, *Mean Mr Mustard*'s original lyric revealed 'his sister Shirley worked in a shop'. When repurposed for the Long Medley, 'sister Shirley' metamorphosed into 'sister Pam' to better segue into yet another brief, if vivid, Lennon pen portrait.

TRACK 6
POLYTHENE PAM

The second brace of Long Medley elements recorded as a single entity, Lennon's Polythene Pam and McCartney's *She Came In Through The Bathroom Window* can claim a tentative grasp on conceptual continuity for the fact they both share origins in the bizarre exploits of Beatle fans. Conjured up on yet another long Rishikesh night, *Polythene Pam* was sparked by memories of Pat Hodgett, an original Beatles aficionado from the Cavern days. "I used to eat polythene all the time," remembered the woman who came to be known as Polythene Pat, "I'd tie it in knots and then eat it. Sometimes I even used to burn it and eat it when it got cold." Perhaps in order to take significant liberties with his subject's reputation, Lennon altered her name to Pam and (adopting his broadest Scouse accent) remodelled her into a 'killer diller' plastic fetishist in 'jackboots and kilt' who 'looks like a man' over vigorously scrubbed 12-string acoustic guitar. Here was another character based in fact, according to Lennon. A mutual acquaintance introduced him to such a woman in Jersey: "He said she dressed in polythene, which she did. She didn't wear jackboots and kilts. I just sort of elaborated."

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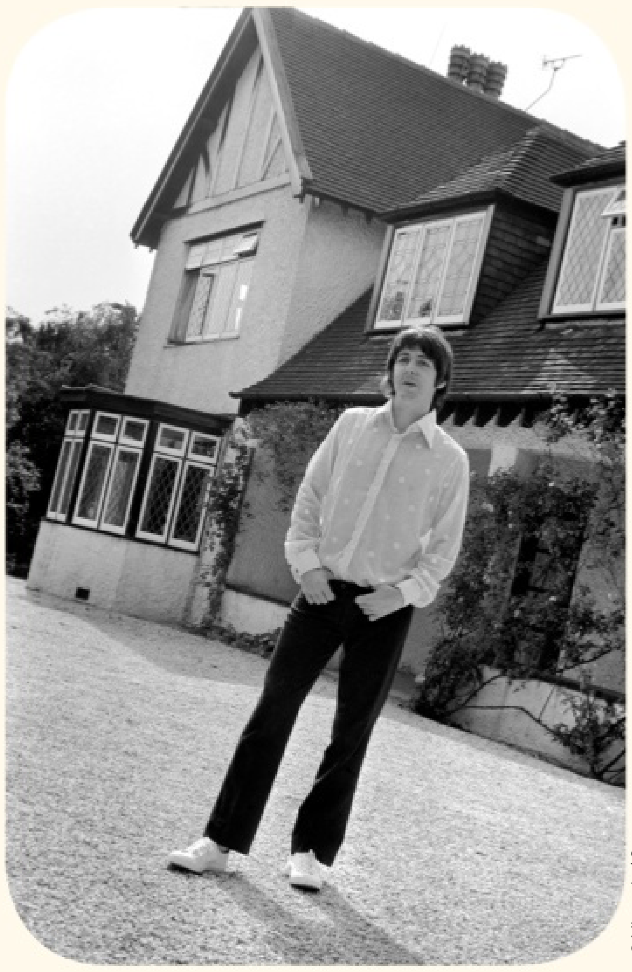

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"THE SECOND SIDE OF ABBEY ROAD IS INCREDIBLE!"

RINGO STARR

ABOVE LEFT: The Beatles were made Members of the Order of the British Empire by the Queen in October 1965

ABOVE: Paul relaxing at his father's home in July 1968. It was here he was inspired to write *Golden Slumbers*

RIGHT: Paul gives the thumbs up during production for the *Yellow Submarine* film, 1st February 1968

TRACK 7

SHE CAME IN THROUGH THE BATHROOM WINDOW

With the basic band set-up throttling back from the self-consciously coarse stridency of *Polythene Pam* to the comparatively measured restraint of *She Came In Through The Bathroom Window*, McCartney took up the medley-within-a-medley's double-tracked lead vocal to unfold his everyday tale of an obsession-based home invasion. A hardcore of latter-day Beatle fans, known as the Apple Scruffs, stood constant vigil outside Abbey Road, Apple Corps and the band members' individual homes. Most daily interactions between fans and fabs were fine – pleasantries were exchanged, autographs signed, boundaries respected – but on one particular occasion a ladder was acquired from McCartney's St John's Wood garden, and a particularly resourceful Scruff called Diane Ashley quite literally, 'came in through the bathroom window'. Once inside she opened the front door and there ensued an orgy of souvenir scavenging. McCartney, reacting with surprisingly good grace, negotiated with the bare-faced burglars to ensure the return of precious family snaps before chronicling the incident in song. Characterised by its author's ever inventive walking bass and complementary lead guitar interactions with George Harrison (not to mention Starr spicing up his percussion with enthusiastically applied whip-cracks), …*Bathroom Window* provided the Long Medley with one of its more satisfying highlights.

TRACK 8

GOLDEN SLUMBERS

The day after Lennon's aforementioned car crash in Scotland, and with the incautious driver laid-up in hospital nursing a gash to the jawline that required seventeen stitches, McCartney convened with Harrison and Starr to set to work on another pair of conjoined Long Medley segments. As '68 drew to a close, McCartney was visiting his father's house in Cheshire and as he sat at the piano, he noticed sheet music for Elizabethan poet Thomas Dekker's *Golden Slumbers*. "I can't read music and couldn't remember the old tune," he recalled, "So I just started playing my own tune to it. I liked the words so I kept them, and it fitted with another bit of a song that I had." Over a lush orchestral introduction (12 uncredited violins, 4 violas, 4 cellos, a double bass, 4 horns, 3 trumpets and 2 trombones), *Golden Slumbers* opens with an introductory lyric of textbook piano-driven Paul McCartney melancholia, Dekker's contribution arrives, along with Ringo's drums, at the song's title line. Given significant heft by a McCartney vocal that's decidedly unbecoming of a lullaby, but all the better for it.

© Keystone/ Getty

TRACK 9
CARRY THAT WEIGHT

After an even more emotional reading of *Golden Slumbers*' opening verse, *Carry That Weight* announced itself with a spirited gang vocal chorus from all four Beatles (Lennon having rejoined the sessions after a week's absence on July 9th) with Ringo in particularly fine and unmistakable voice. We're clearly approaching the Long Medley's crescendo, and an orchestral setting of *You Never Give Me Your Money* explodes into life with the horn section emphasising their every last parp of high drama. George Harrison's arpeggiated guitar ushers in a double-tracked McCartney vocal that's beautifully pitched musically and emotionally, prior to a rousing reprise of the *Carry That Weight* chorus. Here's Paul's emphatic final word on The Beatles, with *You Never Give Me Your Money*'s theme ringing in their ears, he had Lennon, Harrison and Starr – who'd all taken a contrary stance to McCartney in all matters financial throughout *Abbey Road*'s creative process (and now seemed indecently eager to put their Beatles days behind them) lustily singing 'You're gonna carry that weight a long time'. Portentous words McCartney had written in recognition of the fact that none of them would ever truly escape the long shadow cast by their years in The Beatles.

TRACK 10
THE END

This appositely entitled concluding section of the Long Medley catches the upward inclination of *Carry That Weight*'s final Badge arpeggios to arrive in a veritable rush of rock 'n' roll positivity, with every last vestige of bad feeling left on the other side of the studio door. With an 'Oh, yeah!' and an 'All-right!' and an inclusive 'Are you gonna be in my dream tonight?' the listener's deposited at the heart of a party and the end-of-term air of celebration is tangible. The hard work's over, the hair's down and all four Beatles (even Ringo, who's drums had never been recorded in stereo before, let alone let loose in their own right) take a solo, the three guitarists butting heads, over-lapping, interlocking, mirroring 1969's changing, less formal, post-Beatles musical landscape. And suddenly, *The End* finally reaches THE END, and emerging from the searing heat of John Lennon's fuzzed solo, Paul McCartney – insistently chop-sticking away at the piano – prepares to deliver his final lyrical denouement: 'And in the end, the love you take, is equal to the love you make', truly a couplet for the ages. The orchestra swells to a glorious sentimental crescendo, George's guitar gently weeps in sympathy, and there's not a dry eye in the house.

TRACK 11
HER MAJESTY

Presented, after a twenty second pause, as an untidy after-thought, *Her Majesty* was originally conceived as a buffer between *Mean Mr Mustard* and *Polythene Pam*, but ultimately edited out. In essence it's an affectionate observation that while The Queen's 'a pretty nice girl… she doesn't have a lot to say', knocked out by McCartney before anyone else arrived in the studio on July 2nd. Once inserted into the Long Medley it didn't work, so was set aside to be discarded, but tagged on to the end of the album for safety by cautious second engineer, John Kurlander, enjoyed a second listen and – for better or for worse – a last-minute reprieve.

© Mirrorpix / Getty Images

ABOVE: The band met several members of the Royal Family during their career, including the Queen, Prince Philip and Princess Margaret (pictured)

RIGHT: Hearing Yoko play *Moonlight Sonata* gave John the idea for *Because*

© Susan Wood / Getty Images

THE ALBUM COVER

One summer's morning in 1969, The Beatles stepped from the kerbside of Abbey Road into pop-art immortality. This is the inside story of rock's most iconic album sleeve…

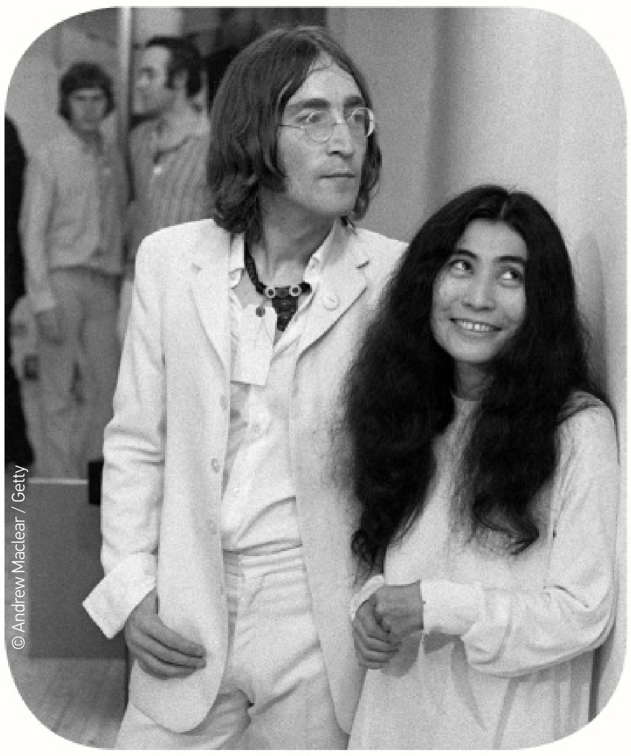
Even now, a half-century later, the savvy motorists of North London know to avoid the stretch outside Abbey Road Studios. All year round, in every extreme of weather, the pilgrims arrive from dawn until dusk, a steady trickle of Beatles disciples visiting the band's favoured recording facility and spiritual home. Each visitor will add their scrawl to the jumble of tributes on the dedicated graffiti wall. They will peer at the one-time Georgian townhouse that was reborn as a state-of-the-art recording studio in November 1931. And, of course, they will process in a four-man lineup across the zebra crossing, recreating the deathless sleeve art of 1969's *Abbey Road* album.

Rewind to the summer of 1969, and the late Scottish photographer Iain Macmillan didn't anticipate any of these cultural ripples when he was handed a rudimentary pencil sketch by Paul McCartney. The *Abbey Road* commission hadn't come out of the blue. Making his way as a freelance photographer, Macmillan had moved in the band's inner circle since he shot Yoko Ono's exhibition for his 1966 release, *The Book Of London*, and was sufficiently trusted by John Lennon to handle the

RIGHT: The cover of *Abbey Road* is one of the most famous images of the 20th century

© CBW/Alamy

ABBEY ROAD
THE BEATLES
S T E R E O



© Andrew Maclear / Getty

cover for the Plastic Ono Band's 1969 single *Give Peace A Chance*.

But the sleeve of *Abbey Road*, he recalled, was to be less artsy – a no-frills shot of the four Beatles crossing the road outside the studio where they were then busy tracking their 11th album. "The whole idea was to make it really simple and photographic. The whole thing was centred around the Abbey Road Studios where the record was made. And the zebra crossing was an idea Paul came up with. I just tried to design it as simply as possibly, making use of all the shapes in the roadway and the trees."

Even a brief this basic took preparation. According to the memoirs of Beatles assistant Kevin Harrington, Macmillan trialled the concept in early August with stand-ins ("To make up the foursome," he wrote, "two studio porters were drafted in as well – I know a photo exists of the four of us, but I'm not in a position to publish it.") With that prototype image approved, the band assembled at the kerbside outside the studio at 10am on 8th August 1969, and prepared to stride into pop-art immortality.

Unlike the elaborate jumble of cardboard celebrities on 1967's *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Macmillan remembered a session that was fast and informal, with the photographer stood atop a stepladder in the middle of the road, taking six shots on a Hasselblad camera with a

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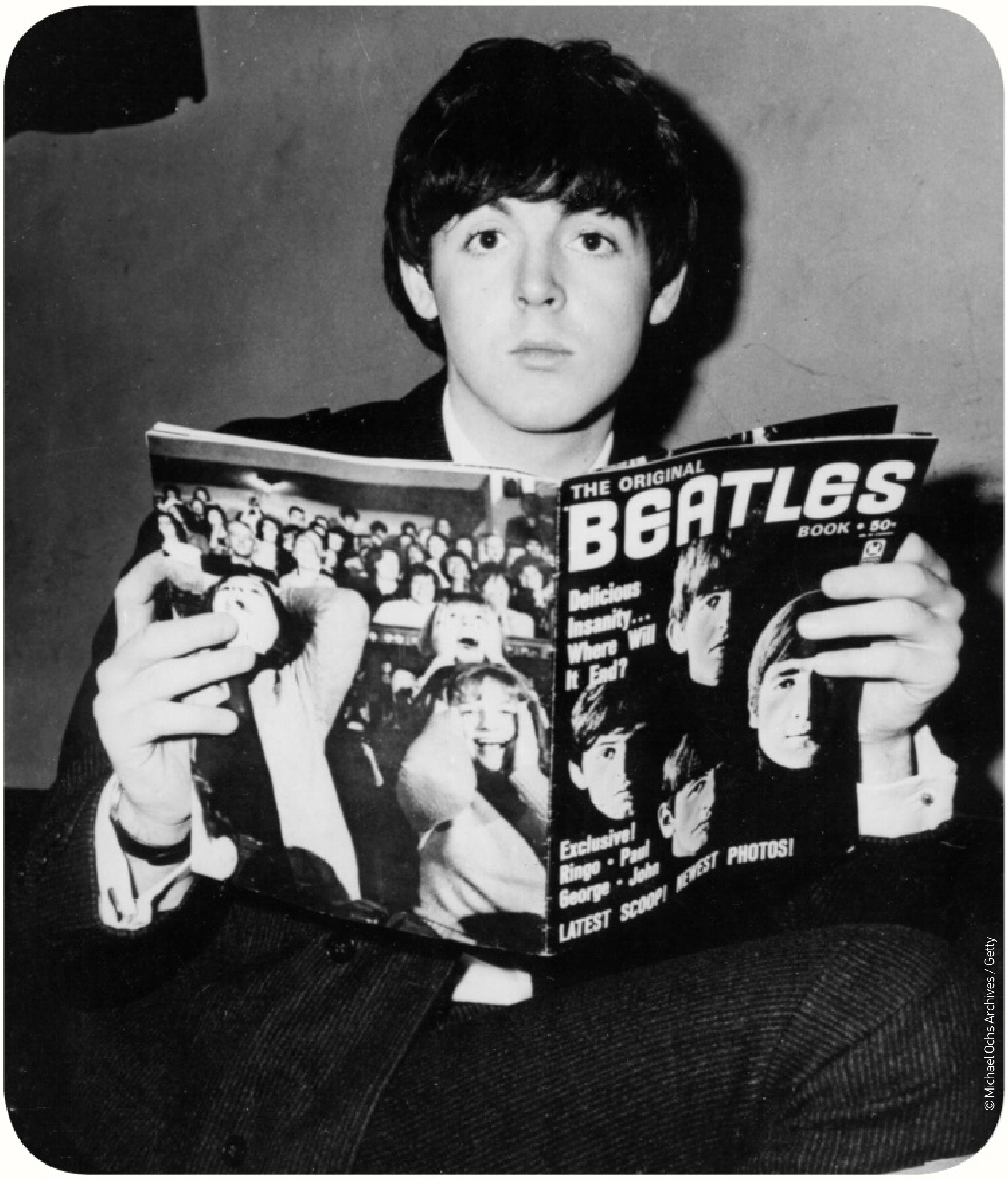

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"WE'RE MEANT TO BE RECORDING, NOT POSING"

JOHN LENNON ON THE *ABBEY ROAD* SHOOT

50mm wide-angle lens, while an accommodating policeman held up the traffic. "We had six goes at it. Three walking one direction, three walking the other direction. Five of the pictures, their feet were in every direction and they were unevenly spaced. The fifth picture – which we chose – was just very simple and well-designed."

That simplicity even extended to Apple Records creative director John Kosh's unprecedented decision to leave off the band's name and album title (making *Abbey Road* the first Beatles release with no cover text, and in some ways even more minimalistic than 1968's *White Album*). But that didn't stop some fans insisting there were cryptic messages hidden in the sleeve art, and citing these as evidence in the burgeoning conspiracy theory – sparked by the US media – that McCartney had been killed in a 1966 car crash and replaced by a lookalike named William Campbell. The band had left this trail of clues, the theory ran, to acknowledge the bassist's death and assuage their guilt at misleading fans.

Closely examined, these 'clues' stretch credibility. McCartney's eyes are closed, like those of a dead body. He holds a cigarette in his right hand, though the bassist is well-known to be left-handed. He is the only member who leads with his right leg. "I thought that was very lucky," said Macmillan, brushing off any deeper significance, "because it just adds a nice little touch of uneveness to the picture. If they'd all been leading with their left foot, it would have looked like a static picture."

But the conspiracy theorists wouldn't be dissuaded that easily. The formation was purposefully arranged like a funeral procession, we were told, with a white-suited Lennon representing the priest at the head of the party, the black-clad Ringo Starr as the undertaker, the barefooted McCartney as the corpse, with a trailing George Harrison clad in the working man's denims that denoted he was the gravedigger. In reality, countered Macmillan, most of the other shots showed the bassist wearing sandals and the lineup fell together entirely at random. "The bare feet is easy. It was just a very, very hot day. Paul just did his thing, took his shoes off, left them lying on the sidewalk, and picked them up when the shoot was over. The order I suggested was the way they normally spell out their names: John, Paul, George and Ringo. But they said, it doesn't have to be in any order. It really just happened like this."

But how about the cream Volkwagen on the left, its numberplate supposedly reading '28IF' (the age

TOP LEFT: Yoko Ono introduced Macmillan to John Lennon, who invited the photographer to take the *Abbey Road* sleeve image

BOTTOM LEFT: Grammy Award-winning Kosh served as the artistic director on *Abbey Road* and *Let It Be*

ABOVE: Conspiracy theorists interpreted Paul's appearance on the *Abbey Road* sleeve as further 'evidence' that he was dead and had been replaced with a lookalike

© CARL DE SOUZA / Getty

McCartney would have been 'if' he'd lived)? Once again, in interviews, Macmillan shrugged this off as a pure coincidence. "I agree about the car being out of place. We tried to move it. The Volkswagen had apparently been parked there for two weeks, someone had gone off and left it there while they went on holiday. We tried to get it moved, but the policeman said they couldn't unless it was causing a traffic offence, which it wasn't."

McCartney was more blunt in an interview with Mojo: "I knew why I'd had bare feet – 'cos I'd kicked off my sandals. I knew the car that said '28IF' was a completely random car that had just been parked. It was madness."

Given the macabre interest, perhaps it would have suited McCartney better if the *Abbey Road* sleeve shot had faded from memory. "I think the worst thing that happened was that I could see people sort of looking at me more closely," the bassist sighed in one interview, "like, 'were his ears always like that?'"

But the sleeve's cultural stature has only grown over the last half-century. The zebra crossing image has been saluted on sleeves by artists spanning from the Red Hot Chili Peppers (on 1988's underdressed *The Abbey Road EP*) to Kanye West (2006's *Late Orchestration*). Even McCartney himself couldn't resist a playful nod to the rumours, leading a shaggy dog across the crossing on 1993's knowingly titled *Paul Is Live*. Meanwhile, in 2012, its enduring draw was underlined by one of Macmillan's rejected images selling at auction for £12,000 (approximately $14,500 at the time).

But perhaps the most joyous legacy of the *Abbey Road* sleeve are the tourist processions that continue to this day: an everyman salute that brings fans a little closer to their idols without paying a penny. And if they're really lucky, they might even find themselves joined on the crossing by the man who started it all. "I'll tell you the truth, I've always wanted to recreate it," admitted McCartney on *The Jonathan Ross Show* in 2014. "You see some Japanese fans there, and you think, 'I'll just hop out'. I've got to do it one day..."

LEFT: Beatles fans from all over the world flock to the famous zebra crossing to recreate the photo for themselves

ABBEY ROAD'S ROCKY RECEPTION

Mixed reviews, dysfunctional bandmates and a whole heap of internal strife. Yet time has eventually proved kind to *Abbey Road*...

When *Abbey Road* was released in the UK on 26th September 1969, only insiders knew that The Beatles were ceasing to function as a genuine group. Nevertheless, there were major clues things had been going awry.

Time magazine noted in its review of the record, published on 3rd October 1969, there was something "special" going on and got to speak to John Lennon about the album.

"We were more together than we had been for a long time," said Lennon. "It's lucky when you get all four feeling funky at the same time." Lennon was talking about a recording session in the summer that produced the latest Beatles record. Appropriately titled *Abbey Road* in honour of the group's favourite studios in London, the disc proved lucky indeed – for listeners who like being disarmed by the world's four most fortunate and famous music makers.

"Melodic, inventive, crammed with musical delights, *Abbey Road* is the best thing The Beatles have done since *Sgt. Pepper* (1967). Whereas that historic record stretched the ear and challenged the mind and imagination, *Abbey Road* is a return to the modest, pie-*Pepper* style of *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver.* It has a cheerful coherence – each song's mood fits comfortably with every other – and a sense of wholeness clearly contrived as a revel in musical pleasure".

"The record's unity is best illustrated by the tightly-knit and unpretentious way it combines a variety of styles. Among them: old-line rock 'n' roll (*Oh! Darling*), low blues (*I Want You*), high camp (*Maxwell's Silver Hammer*), folk (*Here Comes the Sun*). Though the listener here and there finds such things as a vocal chorus or a swash of electronic sound, most of the time the instrumental textures are uncluttered by overdubbing. Rarely has John played better guitar than on *I Want You (She's So Heavy),* a cunning combination of two songs with a chilling, mean blues throb. Rarely have bassist Paul and drummer Ringo achieved more cohesive yet flexible rhythm than on *Mean Mr Mustard* and *Polythene Pam.*"

Despite a majority of songs bearing the familiar Lennon/McCartney credit, the album was also George Harrison's time to shine. His song *Something* was already getting radio play, and the time he had recently spent with Bob Dylan was paying off. "This has helped him achieve a new confidence in his own musical personality," the reviewer noted. "His three colleagues frankly think that *Something* is the best song in the album."

The Guardian was a bit more cynical though. The newspaper's own review had a sense of weariness about the band's 11th (and ultimately final) album. The newspaper originally published the following: "The Beatles have spent the past year at home in Britain since their last album *The Beatles* (commonly known as '*The White Album*'). They've pursued their personal activities and every now and then they got together and parked at their recording studios in Abbey Road, St John's Wood. And now they've done it again; they have produced another album, *Abbey Road.*

"That's the trouble: they've done it again. Here are all their old tricks and gifts. *Maxwell's Silver Hammer* is John Lennon's [it was actually a McCartney track] magic, funny schoolboy cruelty again, style of the [then *Beano* comic characters]

© Keystone / Stringer / Getty

LEFT: Production line workers at the EMI factory preparing Beatles LPs ready for sale in 1965

RIGHT: The back of *Abbey Road*'s sleeve – the 23-second 'hidden' track *Her Majesty* at the end of Side 2 is not listed

"THEY'VE DONE IT AGAIN… HERE ARE ALL THEIR OLD TRICKS AND GIFTS"

GEOFFREY CANNON, MUSIC CRITIC FOR *THE GUARDIAN*

© CBW / Alamy Stock Photo

© Terry O'Neill / Getty images

"OPINION HAS SHIFTED AGAINST THE BEATLES"

ROBERT CHRISTGAU, MUSIC JOURNALIST

Bash Street Kids. *Oh! Darling* is their suave celebration track - this time, they round off the Rolling Stones' *If You Need Me* with bits of *You Can Make It If You Try* and a tailing of Buddy Holly."

It continued: "*Golden Slumbers* sounds like the mandatory McCartney swelling sad-happy number. *Because*, the mandatory Lennon happy-sad number. There is the enigma in *You Never Give Me Your Money*. …. And OK, Ringo, let's orchestrate your new variation on a theme of *Yellow Submarine*, *Octopus's Garden*. And let's have two surprises. Side 1 stops dead. And Side 2 has that little bit added that you miss until you leave the record playing: for Princess Anne to play to her mother.

"The Beatles' music has a special dense texture, which no other band rivals. Even their slightest track, now, has an ambiguity and complexity, which, especially once Lennon adds his strange word-images, turns the music into an object rather than a tune. The old heroes of rock and roll, like Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis, contented themselves with a driving line, which left nothing more than an awakening sense of energy and vitality. Electric music has netted plenty of bigger fish since those days. But the old rock and roll had energy and purpose. And this is what *Abbey Road* has not.

"Of course the album is clever and deft, of course it touches far more ideas than all but the most talented music. But if you've heard *The Beatles*, *Get Back* and *Give Peace A Chance* then you've heard *Abbey Road*.

"Musically, in the narrow sense of the word, The Beatles are as good as ever. But, in the wide, living sense of the word, no one can be as "good as ever" musically. The potency of rock music does not lie in the quality which can be isolated as musical. Anyone who thinks that must be puzzled at the fuss that I as well as others make over it. Rock music

LEFT: The Fab Four at Abbey Road Studios during the recording sessions for *She Loves You* in July 1963

BELOW: Performing at Shea Stadium in New York in August 1965. Beatlemania was at a peak – fans were screaming so loud that the band could barely hear what they were playing

© Michael Ochs Archives / Getty images

is potent through its relationship with the times in which it is played.

"*Abbey Road* contains talent comparable with any other Beatles album but nevertheless is a slight matter. Perhaps to their own relief, The Beatles have lost the desire to touch us. You will enjoy *Abbey Road*. But it won't move you."

Taken as a whole, *The Guardian*'s review was a rather withering and tired appraisal of the world's biggest band. Part of the problem, perhaps, was that The Beatles had long stopped touring or playing live. They had also reduced press engagement to a minimum. And the media always resents that.

Divided opinion

Other initial critical reviews were no more consistent. William Mann of *The Times* newspaper said that the album will "be called gimmicky by people who want a record to sound exactly like a live performance", although he considered it to "teem with musical invention" and added, "Nice as *Come Together* and Harrison's *Something* are – they are minor pleasures in the context of the whole disc … Side 2 is marvellous."

Ed Ward of *Rolling Stone* magazine called the album "complicated instead of complex" and felt that the Moog synthesizer "disembodies and artificializes" the band's sound, adding that they "create a sound that could not possibly exist outside the studio". Again, some journalists seemed to deeply resent The Beatles for no longer being a touring band.

While he found the medley on Side 2 to be their "most impressive music" since *Rubber Soul*, Nik Cohn of *The New York Times* said that, individually, the album's songs are "nothing special".

Albert Goldman, then of *Life* magazine, wrote that *Abbey Road* "is not one of The Beatles' great albums" and, despite some "lovely" phrases and "stirring" segues, Side 2's suite "seems symbolic of The Beatles' latest phase, which might be described as the round-the-clock production of disposable music effects". Goldman would later become infamous as the author of the controversial biography, *The Lives Of John Lennon*.

BELOW: Larking about during a break while on tour in North America, August 1964

RIGHT: The Beatles at a press conference, August 1966. The band's relationship with some critics was somewhat affected by their decision to stop touring that year

© Express / Stringer / Getty images

"WHETHER ABBEY ROAD IS THE BEATLES' BEST WORK IS DEBATABLE, BUT IT IS THE MOST IMMACULATELY PRODUCED"

RICHIE UNTERBERGER, MUSIC JOURNALIST

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ABOVE: The Beatles' final tour performance took place in San Francisco's Candlestick Park on 29th August 1966. It would be the band's last ever paid concert

LEFT: On stage at the Washington Coliseum in February 1964

Conversely, Chris Welch was more positive in *Melody Maker*. He wrote, "The truth is, their latest LP is just a natural born gas, entirely free of pretension, deep meanings or symbolism… While production is simple compared to past intricacies, it is still extremely sophisticated and inventive."

Derek Jewell of *The Sunday Times* found the album "refreshingly terse and unpretentious", and although he lamented the band's "cod-1920s jokes (*Maxwell's Silver Hammer*) and Ringo's "obligatory nursery arias (*Octopus's Garden*)", he considered that *Abbey Road* "touches higher peaks than did their last album".

John Mendelsohn, writing for *Rolling Stone*, called it "breathtakingly recorded" and praised Side 2 especially, equating it to "the whole of *Sgt. Pepper*" and stating, "That The Beatles can unify seemingly countless musical fragments and lyrical doodlings into a uniformly wonderful suite... seems potent testimony that no, they've far from lost it, and no, they haven't stopped trying."

While covering The Rolling Stones' 1969 American tour for *The Village Voice*, Robert Christgau reported from a meeting with Greil Marcus in Berkeley that "opinion has shifted against The Beatles. Everyone is putting down *Abbey Road*."

Fans vote with their wallets

Despite various critics' very mixed reviews, there was no doubting The Beatles' commercial clout. *Abbey Road* sold 4 million copies in its first two months of release. It went to Number 1 in the UK and the US, and in the latter it was the best-selling album of 1969, despite being released in September – relatively late in the year. Indeed, it reached the top of the album charts almost everywhere it was released. (The Netherlands seemed to be the only dissenters: it reached only Number 3.)

By the end of the 1970s, *Abbey Road* had sold over 7 million copies in the US alone. Even in 2011, CNN reported it was the best-selling vinyl LP of that year. Yet there is no doubt that it's a strange album.

Abbey Road is, stylistically, extremely diverse, and few critics seem to agree on it. Legendary crooner Frank Sinatra later described *Something* as "the greatest love song ever written", once thanking Lennon and McCartney (clearly unaware it was written and sung by Harrison). After McCartney's *Yesterday*, *Something* is the second-most covered Beatles song with over 200 recorded versions.

The hard-riffing *I Want You (She's So Heavy)* has been heralded by many as a template for stoner/doom rock. In complete contrast was George Harrison's *Here Comes The Sun* - many years later, Rolling Stone's Mikal Gilmore likened the track to the McCartney-written *Let It Be* and Lennon's *Imagine* as Harrison's "graceful anthem of hope amid difficult realities".

The Beatles' producer, the late George Martin, once described *Here Comes The Sun* as "in some ways one of the best songs ever written". Both Lennon and McCartney later said, separately, that it was the "best"/"finest" song on *Abbey Road*.

What no reviewer, or even listener, then seemed to realise was that closing track *The End* indeed really was the end… of The Beatles. "I didn't know at the time that it was the last Beatles record that we would make," George Harrison said of *Abbey Road* in an interview with *Rolling Stone*, "But it felt as if we were reaching the end of the line."

AFTER ABBEY ROAD

Fallouts, money troubles and personal strife: how The Beatles survived a crisis to create a masterpiece in their final hour

One Friday morning in August 1969, photographer Iain Macmillan hoisted up a stepladder in the middle of Abbey Road in north-west London. He took six shots of The Beatles as they filed across the zebra crossing outside EMI Studios, where the band were applying the final touches to their final recording.

Paul McCartney chose one of the stills for the cover of *Abbey Road*, released the following month. In doing so, a casual moment became deeply symbolic. Here were all four members of the world's biggest pop group, briefly in step with one another during a fractious time, walking away from the studio that had been home for their entire recording life. By extension, they were also walking away from everything. Before *Abbey Road* was even in the shops, John Lennon had told his bandmates that he wanted "a divorce".

The reasons behind The Beatles' demise were complicated. In the studio, creative and personal tensions began to surface during *The White Album* sessions the previous year. Matters came to a head when Ringo Starr abruptly quit, only to be coaxed back a fortnight later. Similar problems beset the sessions for *Get Back* in January 1969, the results of which would eventually be salvaged as *Let It Be*. The idea to reconvene at Abbey Road, just three weeks after *Get Back* had fizzled to a halt, had the feeling of a last-ditch mission to rescue The Beatles' career.

It was a decision that worked, to a degree. While the band's chief songwriters were governed by different artistic impulses by this point – McCartney wanted to experiment with a thematic medley; Lennon was keen to stick to a more traditional format – a compromise was reached by devoting one side of vinyl to each.

© Bettmann/ Getty Images

Other forces weren't quite so reconcilable. Yoko Ono's presence in the studio (she and Lennon were married in Gibraltar midway through the album sessions) was the cause of a certain amount of friction, given that it was a violation of The Beatles' pact to never allow wives or girlfriends into the working environment. What's more, Lennon encouraged her to make suggestions about how the songs were coming along. After the couple had suffered a car accident, Lennon installed a bed into the studio for Yoko, with a microphone suspended above it, so as not to stem her vocal input.

But this was a minor issue compared to what was happening behind the scenes. The Beatles' Apple corporation was proving a financial nightmare. Launched amid much fanfare in January 1968, primarily as an excuse to avoid paying astronomical rates of tax, it was an empire based on entrepreneurial naïvety rather than hard business savvy. It soon began to haemorrhage money on an alarming scale. None of the various Apple endeavours – be it electronics, retail or the introduction of Zapple, their own avant-garde label – were succeeding.

The Beatles had lacked a rudder since the death of manager Brian Epstein in August 1967. Their floundering fortunes had instead been placed in the hands of US businessman Allen Klein in the first few weeks of 1969. A controversial and tenacious figure who'd recently been sacked by The Rolling Stones (unhappy with his handling of their affairs), Klein was nevertheless entrusted by Lennon, Starr and Harrison to save The Beatles' messy finances.

LEFT: Ringo took on more acting roles when The Beatles split. He starred in films such as *The Magic Christian* (pictured, with Peter Sellers) and *Son of Dracula*

RIGHT: Although they had effectively disbanded when Lennon left the band in September 1969, The Beatles' break up was not made public until April 1970

© Epics / Getty Images

McCartney was the sole dissenter, preferring instead to hand legal matters over to his father-in-law, lawyer Lee Eastman. The fallout was bitter and protracted. It also turned the rupture in the band's personal relations into a schism. All this emotional tumult inevitably found its way onto *Abbey Road*. McCartney's *Carry That Weight*, for instance, addressed what he called the increasingly "heavy" situation at Apple. "It was serious, paranoid heaviness and it was just very uncomfortable," he told biographer Barry Miles.

With the other three Beatles sticking with Klein as the group's business manager, McCartney was forced to take sides. This would eventually lead him, on New Year's Eve 1970, to file a lawsuit against his bandmates in order to extricate himself from Klein and Apple. At the subsequent court proceedings, the judge found in McCartney's favour.

For the remainder of 1969, though, each Beatle went about their separate business. The Lennons formed the Plastic Ono Band and started an anti-war campaign by recording *Give Peace A Chance* in a Montreal hotel room. As if to emphasise the competing factions within the group, Harrison's majestic *Something* and the Plastic Ono Band's *Cold Turkey* – rejected by The Beatles, the song detailed John and Yoko's withdrawal from heroin – were released in the same month.

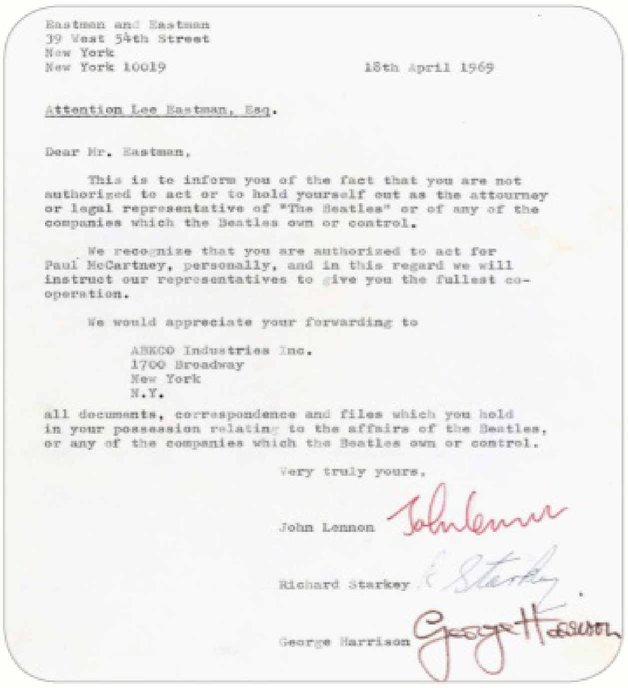
Harrison chose to occupy himself with a solo career and continued to champion other artists on the Apple roster. Starr was busy as a movie actor (his second post-Beatles film, *The Magic Christian*, was wrapped up during the *Abbey Road* sessions), while McCartney began making a series of home recordings that would lead to a debut LP. When *Life* magazine tracked him down to his isolated Scottish farm in late October '69, McCartney was forced to concede that "the Beatle thing is over." The formal announcement of the band's dissolution was finally made the following April.

The Beatles had simply had enough. After years of intense public scrutiny and unprecedented levels of fame, they had grown weary and suspicious. Breaking up was a release. And a relief.

"The Beatles had gone through so much and for such a long time," remarked producer George Martin. "They'd been incarcerated with each other for nearly a decade and I was surprised that they'd lasted as long as they did. I wasn't at all surprised that they'd split up because they all wanted to lead their own lives."

RIGHT: With the business failing, The Beatles gave away thousands of pounds worth of stock from their Apple Boutique when it closed on 31st July 1968

BELOW: A letter from John, Ringo and George to Paul's manager Lee Eastman. The dispute over management was a major factor in the break up of The Beatles



Eastman and Eastman
39 West 54th Street
New York
New York 10019

18th April 1969

Attention Lee Eastman, Esq.

Dear Mr. Eastman,

This is to inform you of the fact that you are not authorized to act or to hold yourself out as the attourney or legal representative of "The Beatles" or of any of the companies which the Beatles own or control.

We recognize that you are authorized to act for Paul McCartney, personally, and in this regard we will instruct our representatives to give you the fullest co-operation.

We would appreciate your forwarding to

ABKCO Industries Inc.
1700 Broadway
New York
N.Y.

all documents, correspondence and files which you hold in your possession relating to the affairs of the Beatles, or any of the companies which the Beatles own or control.

Very truly yours,

John Lennon
Richard Starkey
George Harrison

© Getty Images

> "THE BEATLES HAD GONE THROUGH SO MUCH AND FOR SUCH A LONG TIME"
>
> GEORGE MARTIN

Album timeline

After eight years and twelve studio albums, all four Beatles stepped into the studios one last time to make *Abbey Road*

Date released
Date recorded

Please Please Me – Sep '62 – Feb '63 * – 22 March 1963

With The Beatles – Jul – Oct '63 – 22 November 1963

A Hard Day's Night – Jan – Jun '64 – 10 July 1964

Beatles For Sale – Aug – Oct '64 – 4 December 1964

Help! – Feb – Jun '65 – 6 August 1965

Rubber Soul – Oct – Nov '65 – 3 December 1965

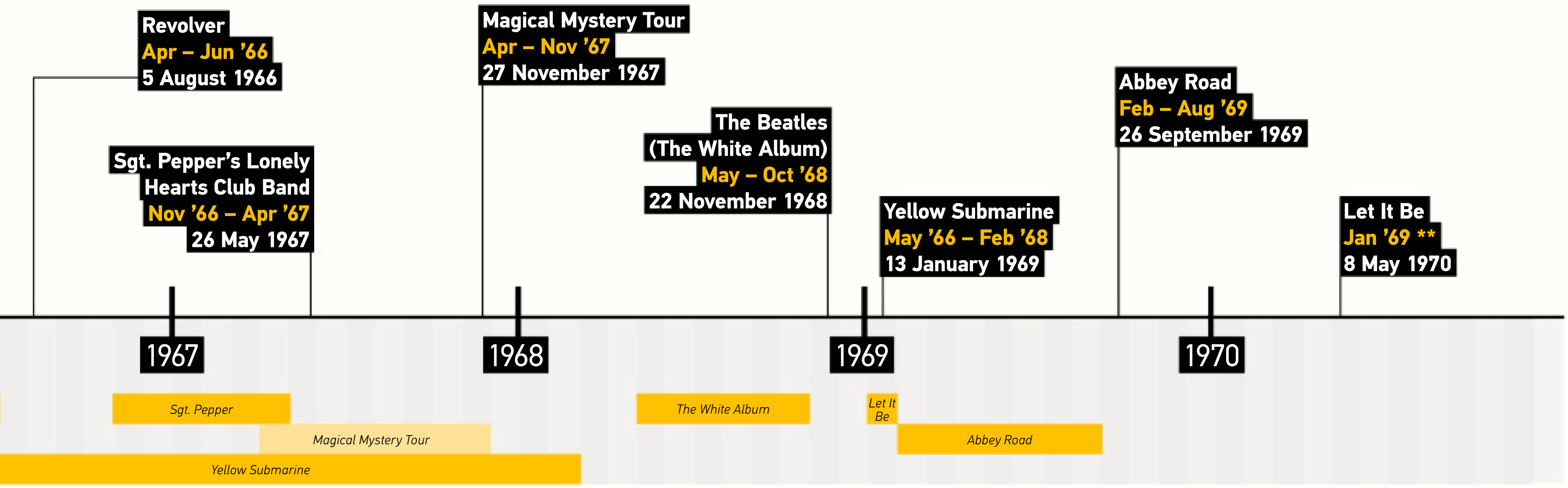
1963 | 1964 | 1965 | 1966

Please Please Me | *With The Beatles* | *A Hard Day's Night* | *Beatles For Sale* | *Help!* | *Rubber Soul* | *Revolver*

* Ten of *Please Please Me*'s 14 tracks were recorded in a single day on 11th February 1963

** While the majority of the *Let It Be* was recorded in January 1969, Across The Universe was recorded during the 1967 *Magical Mystery Tour* sessions. *I Me Mine* was recorded in 1970 without Lennon, who had effectively left the band by then

© Bettmann / Getty Images



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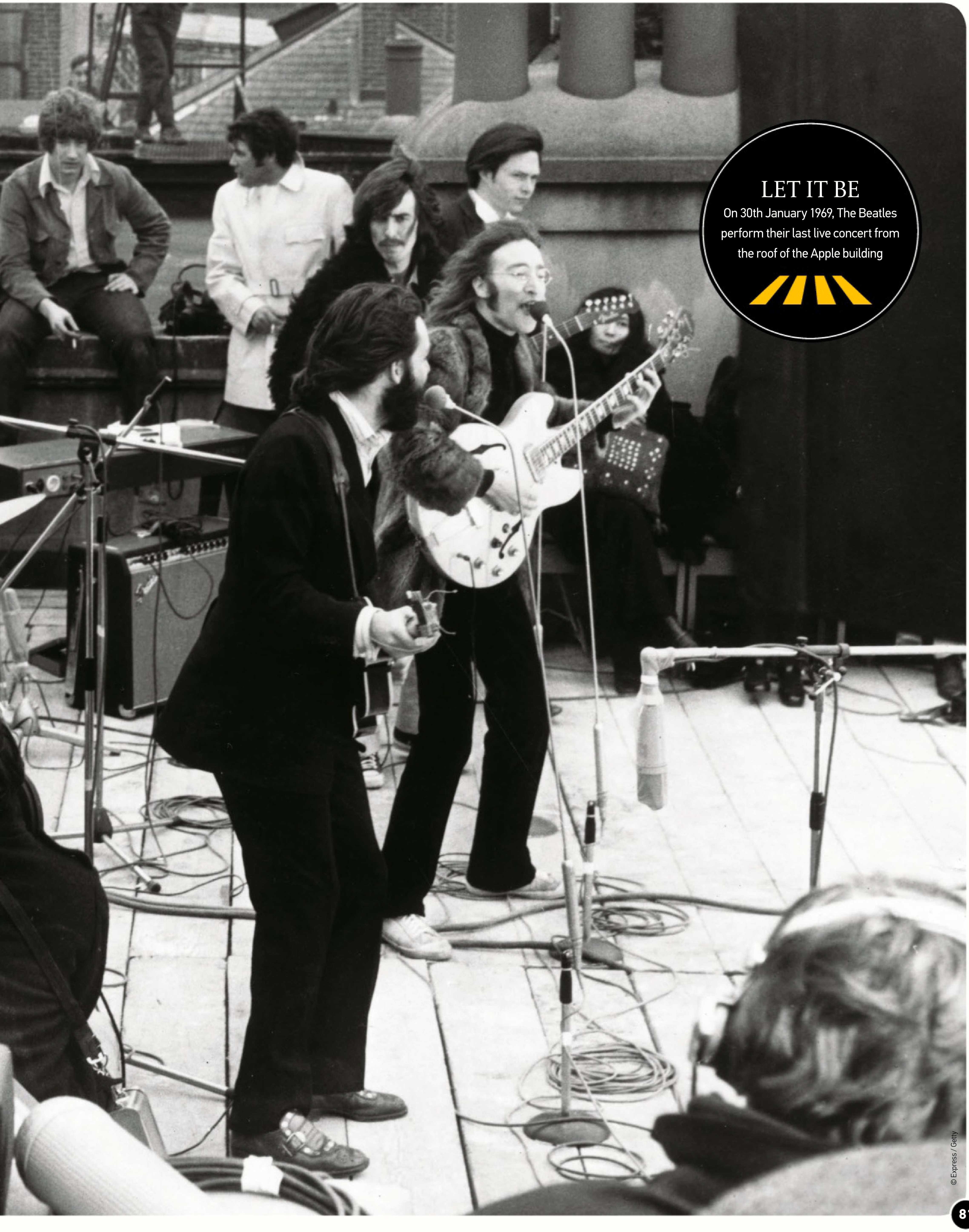


LET IT BE

On 30th January 1969, The Beatles perform their last live concert from the roof of the Apple building

© Express / Getty

50 YEARS OF ABBEY ROAD: THE LEGACY

Greeted by mixed reviews on its initial release, *Abbey Road* has since proved to be a timeless and hugely influential classic. Even by The Beatles' lofty standards

You know an album has legs when even its shortest song travels miles. At a slender 23 seconds, *Her Majesty* was a last-minute addition to *Abbey Road*, tacked on after the intended finale of Side Two, *The End*. Yet this fleeting afterthought has since been deemed substantial enough to warrant covers by a host of disparate artists, from anarcho-punks Chumbawamba and jazz guitarist Charlie Byrd to grunge icon Eddie Vedder and US indie-folk types, The Low Anthem.

Half a century on, it's a perfect illustration of *Abbey Road*'s enduring power. The fact that the album is stuffed with great songs is merely one facet of its longevity. Daringly experimental, it's a statement of intent in changing times, its progressive moments pointing the way out of the '60s and into the next decade and beyond. A magical fusion of creative ambition and new technology. The very things that some critics derided on the album's initial release – *The Times* dismissed *Abbey Road*'s production as "gimmicky"; *Life* magazine scoffed at its "disposable music effects" – have helped shape the course of pop music in the ensuing years.

Abbey Road doesn't quite feel like any other Beatles album. "Technically, because of the equipment used, it was very different," states assistant engineer John Kurlander, who's since gone on to enjoy a hugely successful career in the fields of rock, classical music and Hollywood film, including his Oscar-winning work on *The Lord Of The Rings* trilogy. "When we recorded *Abbey Road*, we changed from a valve desk to the first EMI solid-state desk. This was a brand new console, so it sounded different."

The result was a richer, fuller sound that deepened the subtleties and sharpened the dynamics of The Beatles' music. The same EMI console – the TG12345 to be exact – was later used on Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side Of The Moon* and *Wish You Were Here*, amongst others.

Another key factor, adopted wholesale by the music industry over the following decades, was the emphasis on stereo technology. "All the previous Beatles albums were basically recorded and conceived in mono," explains Kurlander. "But *Abbey Road* was all figured out for stereo. Another big change happened halfway through the sessions, when we moved over from four-track to eight-track. They'd been using four-track technology for years, with all its limitations."

The Beatles had treated the studio as a private playground ever since they'd retired from touring in 1966. Yet it wasn't until *Abbey Road* that they finally had every modern toy at their disposal. The final piece of equipment was the Moog synthesizer. George Harrison had taken charge of this multi-faceted contraption for his second solo LP, *Electronic Sound*, recorded a few months before

© Oli Scarff / Getty

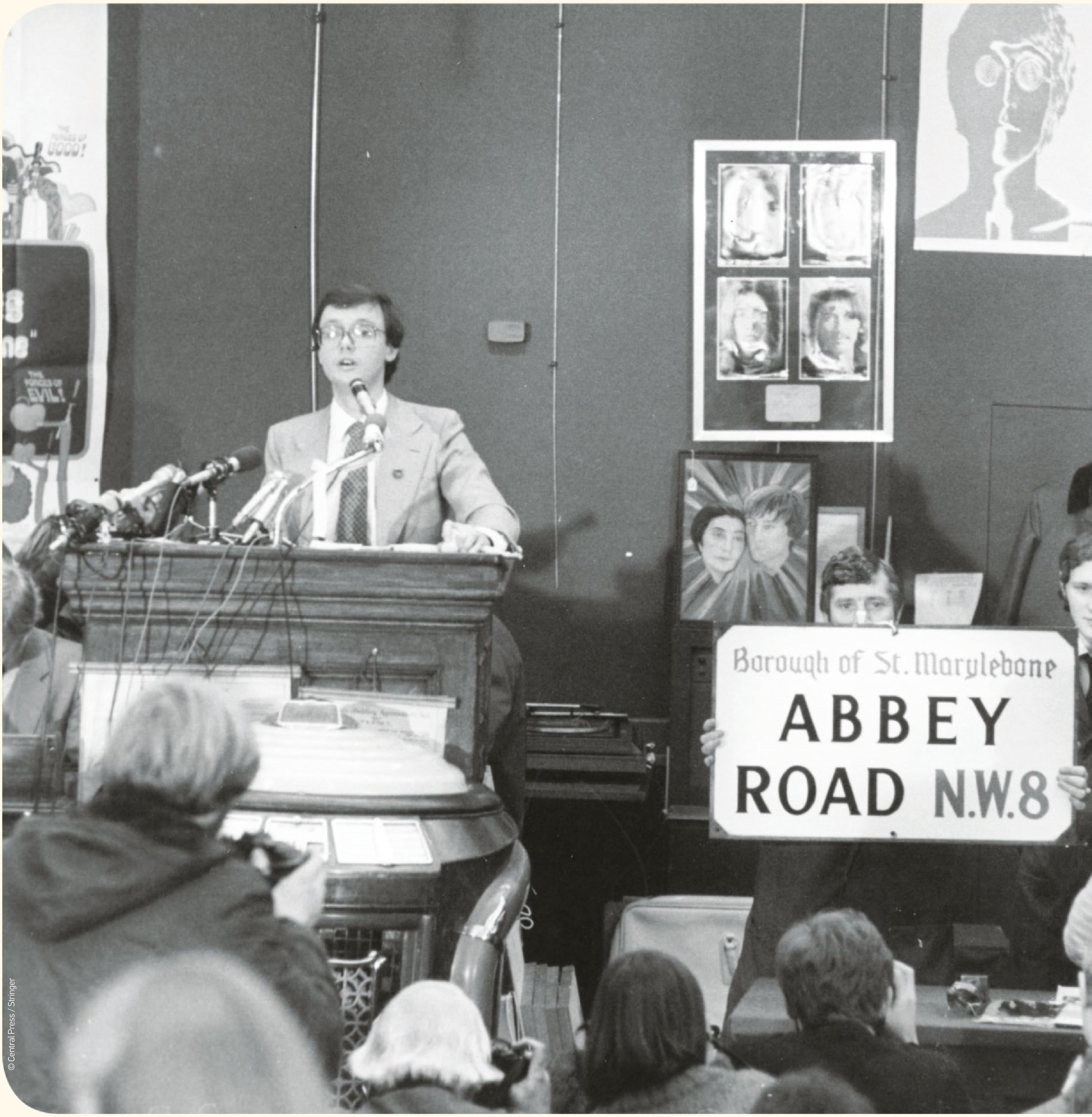
RIGHT: Each year, thousands of tourists from all over the world visit Abbey Road, many of whom try to recreate the iconic album cover

LEFT: Abbey Road Studios – formerly the EMI Recording Studios – in St John's Wood is arguably the most famous recording studio in the world

© Richard Boll / Getty

“IF IT HADN’T BEEN FOR THE BEATLES, THERE WOULDN’T BE ANYONE LIKE US AROUND”

JIMMY PAGE – LED ZEPPELIN



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the *Abbey Road* sessions. The other Beatles saw the possibilities too.

"This thing arrived and it got put in a separate control room," Kurlander recalls. "Mike Vickers, who'd been in Manfred Mann, was the only person around who knew how the Moog worked. He was brought in to demonstrate it to them. So *Abbey Road* was unique because of a combination of stuff – the new desk, the Moog, moving up to eight-track and everybody just wanting to do unusual things, like putting tea cloths on the drums. It was just a case of getting something completely different."

It should be noted that the Moog – used to sterling effect on songs like *Here Comes The Sun*, *Because* and *I Want You (She's So Heavy)* - became a staple of the '70s rock scene, particularly on the proggy excursions of Yes and ELP. Stevie Wonder used it liberally on his peerless run of early '70s albums, before it transitioned to disco when Giorgio Moroder provided the rhythmic thrust of Donna Summer's *I Feel Love*. By the end of the decade, the Moog had been commandeered by a new breed of electro-pop artists, the most commercially successful of which was Beatles fan Gary Numan.

One of Kurlander's fellow engineers on *Abbey Road* was Alan Parsons, who would later work on *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, prior to founding his own group, The Alan Parsons Project. For him,

© Danny Martindale / Getty

ABOVE TOP: Booker T & the MGs were among the first of many bands to pay homage to *Abbey Road*, with their 1970 album, *McLemore Avenue*

LEFT: At the first ever Rock 'n' Roll auction at Sotheby's Belgravia in 1981, an Abbey Road street sign sold for £320 – roughly £1,200 or $1,500 today

ABOVE RIGHT: In 2007, the *Abbey Road* cover (along with The Beatles' other albums) was even used on commemorative UK stamps

Abbey Road-era Beatles had a profound effect on the development of pop and rock music. "They showed everyone that a band didn't just play their instruments and then add vocals, but that they were willing to go beyond that," he told *Ultimate Guitar* in a 2011 interview. "They were always ready to experiment and push the limits of the recording studio to the boundaries."

So much for its directional sound: what about the music? The seeds of the future are scattered within the grooves of *Abbey Road*. The extended medley swiftly became a popular device amongst prog bands, keen to expand the language of conventional rock. The mellow acoustics of *Here Comes The Sun* presaged the singer-songwriter boom of the early '70s, just as *I Want You (She's So Heavy)* foreshadowed the arrival of stoner/doom-rock. And *Her Majesty* was one of the first examples of 'hidden tracks' in pop music, another tactic later adopted by others.

It's also instructive to see how the perception of *Abbey Road* has changed over time. Contemporary reviews were mixed. Detractors – and there were more than a few – failed to see much merit in the album at all. Most damning of all was a review by *The Guardian*'s Geoffrey Cannon. "[*Abbey Road*] is a slight matter," he wrote. "Perhaps to their own relief, The Beatles have lost the desire to touch us. You will enjoy *Abbey Road*, but it won't move you."

The passage of time has proved otherwise. Music, as with the rest of the creative arts, may be a highly subjective matter, but Cannon's closing statement is patently false. *Abbey Road* continues to move people on a global scale.

The sales figures speak for themselves. *Abbey Road* has never been out of print since its release in September 1969. It entered the UK album charts at number one and stayed firmly put for nearly three months. In Britain, it was the fourth-biggest selling album of the '60s, behind *Sgt. Pepper...*, *The Sound Of Music* and *With The Beatles*. America took the album to its heart too. It spent 11 weeks on top of the

BELOW: The band's iconic *Abbey Road* poses were immortalised in wax by Madame Tussauds in 2015

RIGHT: The gold record awarded to The Beatles after Abbey Road sold over 500,000 copies. It went on to go platinum several times over in countries across the world

© Handout/ Getty

5

ESSENTIAL ABBEY ROAD COVERS

Come Together, from the album *The Other Side Of Abbey Road*
George Benson • 1970

This fabulous, groove-laden instrumental is arguably the highlight of Benson's *Abbey Road* makeover, as he and the band deliver a consummate exercise in freeform funk-jazz.

I Want You (She's So Heavy), from the album *McLemore Avenue*
Booker T & The MGs • 1970

The closing medley of the Memphis quartet's soulful *Abbey Road* tribute is a 10-minute triumph, culminating with this bluesy, cinematic version of John Lennon's heaviest moment.

Something, standalone single
Frank Sinatra • 1970

Elvis did a great cover on 1973's *Aloha From Hawaii* TV special, but Sinatra cut the definitive version of George Harrison's most seductive number.

Here Comes The Sun, from the album of the same name
Nina Simone • 1971

The high priestess of soul rarely sounded as vulnerable as she did on this plaintive, piano-driven remake of George Harrison's timeless classic, augmented by a discreet string section.

Because, from the *American Beauty* OST
Elliott Smith • 1999

Featuring over the end credits of Sam Mendes' Oscar-winning drama, the late US songwriter was at his most intimate on this spellbinding rendition, given extra depth by choral harmonies.

© Ethan Miller / Getty

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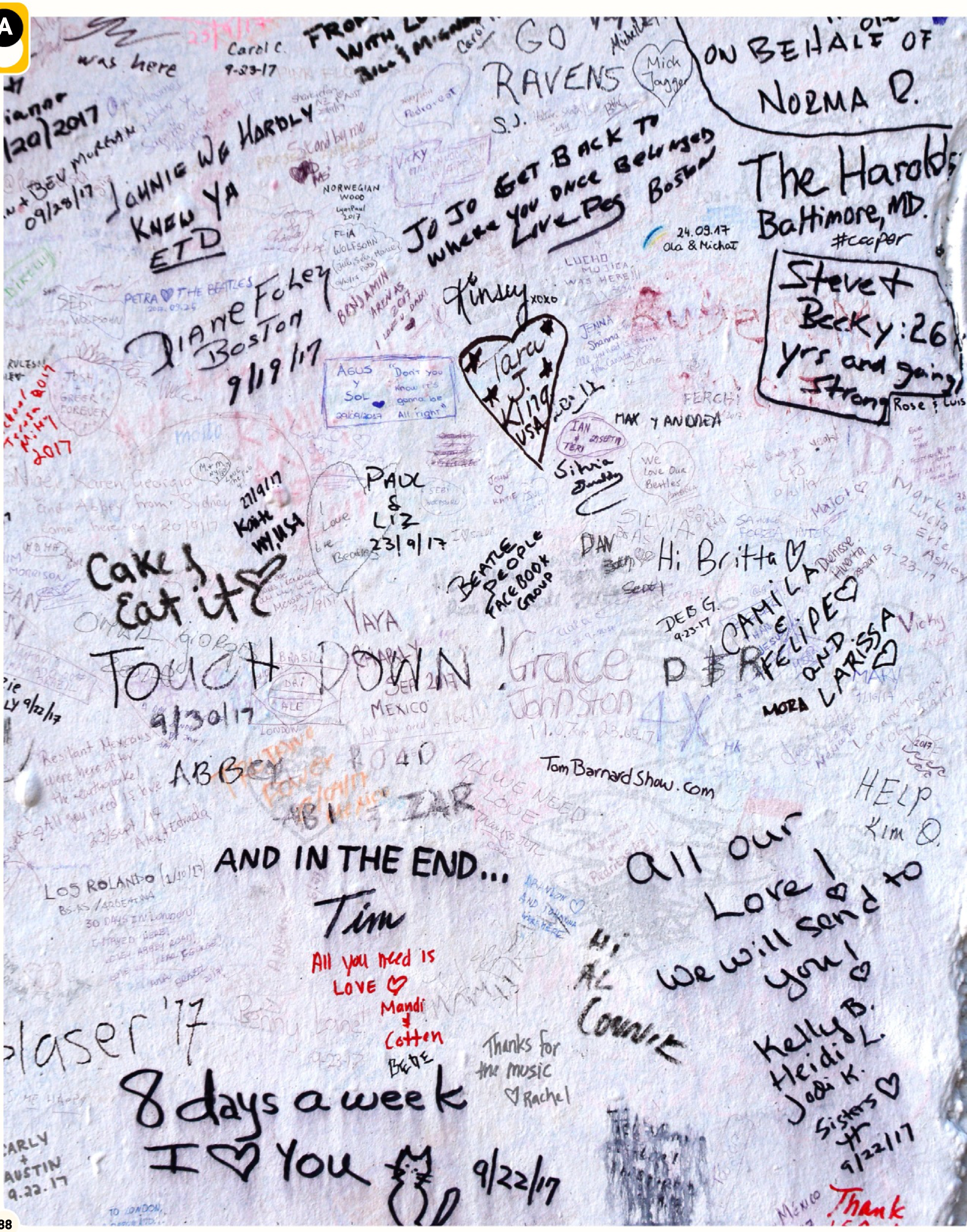

was here
Carol C.
9-23-17
GO RAVENS
ON BEHALF OF NORMA D.
Mick Jagger
S.J.
JOHNNIE WE HARDLY KNEW YA
ETD
JO JO GET BACK TO WHERE YOU ONCE BELONGED
LIVE PEG BOSTON
The Harolds
Baltimore, MD.
#caper
24.09.17
Ola & Michał
NORWEGIAN WOOD
PETRA ♥ THE BEATLES
Diane Foley
Boston
9/19/17
Kinsey
XOXO
Tara J. King
USA
Steve + Becky: 26 yrs and going strong
Rose & Luis
Agus y Sol
"Don't you know it's gonna be all right"
MAX Y ANDREA
Silvia
We love our Beatles
PAUL & LIZ
23/9/17
Cake & Eat it
BEATLE PEOPLE FACEBOOK GROUP
DAN
Hi Britta ♥
DEB G.
9-23-17
CAMILA E FELIPE ♥
LARISSA
MORA
TOUCH DOWN
9/30/17
Grace Johnston
MEXICO
ABBEY ROAD
Tom Barnard Show.com
HELP
AND IN THE END...
Tim
All you need is LOVE ♥
Mandi & Cotten
All our Love! We will send to you!
Hi AL Connie
Thanks for the music
♡ Rachel
Kelly B.
Heidi L.
Jodi K.
Sisters ♥
9/22/17
8 days a week
I ♥ You
9/22/17
CARLY + AUSTIN
9.22.17
Thank

Billboard listings and hung the charts around until May 1971. *Abbey Road*, in fact, was the first Beatles LP to sell over 10 million copies. Discounting compilations, it's now second only to *Sgt. Pepper...* when it comes to Beatles album sales, with figures of over 14.5 million.

The critical re-evaluation of *Abbey Road* has been in full swing for some time. *The Telegraph* recently hailed it as "epic, emotional and utterly gorgeous". *Billboard* asserted that "as far as rock music swan songs go, this might be the best there's ever been", while *Pitchfork* called it "the perfect ending to a recording career [by] a band still in its prime, capable of songwriting and recording feats others could only envy."

In 2006, *Time* included it in their round-up of the All-Time 100 Albums. Three years later, readers of *Rolling Stone* voted it the greatest Beatles album of them all. *Abbey Road* was also featured in *1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die*, deemed "as progressive as anything the quartet ever recorded."

Fellow musicians continue to honour *Abbey Road*. *Come Together* was covered as early as 1970 by Ike & Tina Turner. It's since inspired versions by such names as Aerosmith, Michael Jackson, Elton John, Marilyn Manson, Soundgarden and Arctic Monkeys, who chose to perform it at the opening ceremony of the 2012 Summer Olympics.

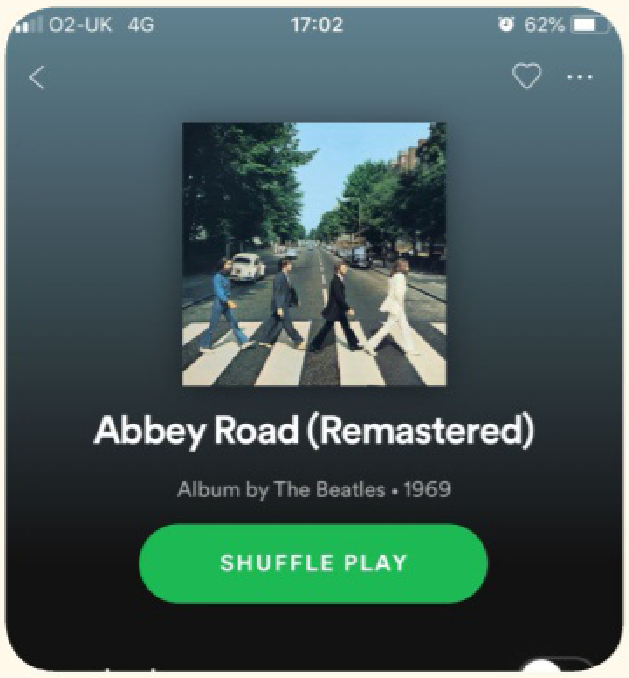
Something quickly became part of the live repertoire of Frank Sinatra, who called it "the greatest love song of the past 50 years." By the end of the '70s, it had already been covered by over 150 different artists. The final list reads like a who's who of A-listers: Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Ray Charles, James Brown, Willie Nelson and more. It's a similar story across most of the tracks on *Abbey Road*. Even *Octopus's Garden* made it onto *The Muppet Show*.

Several artists have devoted whole portions of albums to *Abbey Road*. Phil Collins chose to tackle the Side Two medley on 1998's Beatles covers project, *In My Life*. The Beastie Boys copied the methodology for their *B-Boy Bouillabaisse* suite on *Paul's Boutique*, sampling *The End* to toast the Beatles connection.

Billy Joel's 1978 album, *52nd Street* was so-named after *Abbey Road*. A year earlier he'd recorded his own medley, *Scenes From An Italian Restaurant*, directly influenced by Side Two of The Beatles' magnum opus. In 2011, meanwhile, Grateful Dead stalwarts Bob Weir and Phil Lesh led a jam band called Furthur, covering every track from *Abbey Road* throughout their tour.

Compared to George Benson, however, they were late to the party. The American jazz guitarist began recording *The Other Side Of Abbey Road*, reinterpreting much of the original album with a crack team of players, within weeks of *Abbey Road*'s release. Benson would later call it "a turning point in my career".

The appearance of *The Other Side Of Abbey Road* in 1970 coincided with another themed LP: *McLemore Avenue*. Issued by Booker T & The MG's, it consisted of mostly instrumental covers of *Abbey Road* songs. "I thought it was incredibly courageous of The Beatles to drop their format and move out musically like they did," Booker T Jones explained later. "To push the limit like that and reinvent themselves when they had no need to do that... The music was just incredible so I felt I needed to pay tribute to it."



ABOVE: The Beatles' back catalogue was released on streaming services in 2015. *Abbey Road*'s *Here Comes The Sun* and *Come Together* top The Beatles' most-played tracks on Spotify, with over 318 million and 213 million plays respectively (as of July 2019)

LEFT: Fans write tributes to their musical heroes across the walls outside Abbey Road Studios. So many people write dedications that the walls have to be repainted every month

BELOW: Over the past five decades, *Abbey Road* has inspired – and continues to influence – musicians across many different genres

© CBW / Alamy Stock Photo | *Opposite page:* Robert Alexander / Getty

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The homage extended to the album's title – East McLemore Avenue was the location of the band's Stax Studio in Memphis – while its sleeve depicted the four MG's crossing the street in single file, aping the four Beatles on *Abbey Road*. Indeed, the album's durability is also partly linked to its sleeve. It remains arguably the most iconic LP cover of all-time, certainly the most imitated. Kanye West, The Simpsons, the cast of *Sesame Street* and the Red Hot Chili Peppers (who famously ambled over the zebra crossing wearing nothing but strategically-placed tube socks) are among the parodists.

By December 2010, Abbey Road's zebra crossing was given Grade II listed status in light of its "cultural and historical importance". EarthCam installed a permanent webcam at the site a year later, where it continues to cater for hordes of visiting Beatles fans. The effect of the album itself has been so significant that EMI changed the name of the recording complex to Abbey Road Studios in the early '70s, as a tacit acknowledgement of The Beatles' legacy.

"I was certainly aware that *Abbey Road* was special while we were making it," reflects John Kurlander. "But it never occurred to me that we'd be talking about it for more than four or five years afterwards. Certainly not 50 years later. Maybe it's to do with the cover. Not everyone can duplicate the other Beatles album covers, but it's so easy to copy that one. But then there's the music. When you listen to those Beatles albums years later, you realise that certain tracks aren't so great, even when it comes to *Sgt. Pepper*.... But I don't think there are any weak spots on *Abbey Road*. Let's be honest. There's really nothing on there that you would happily dispense with."

"THE BEATLES WERE OUR BIBLE"

BRIAN MAY – QUEEN

LEFT: A crowd of fans gather at the Abbey Road crossing to celebrate the album's 40th anniversary in 2009

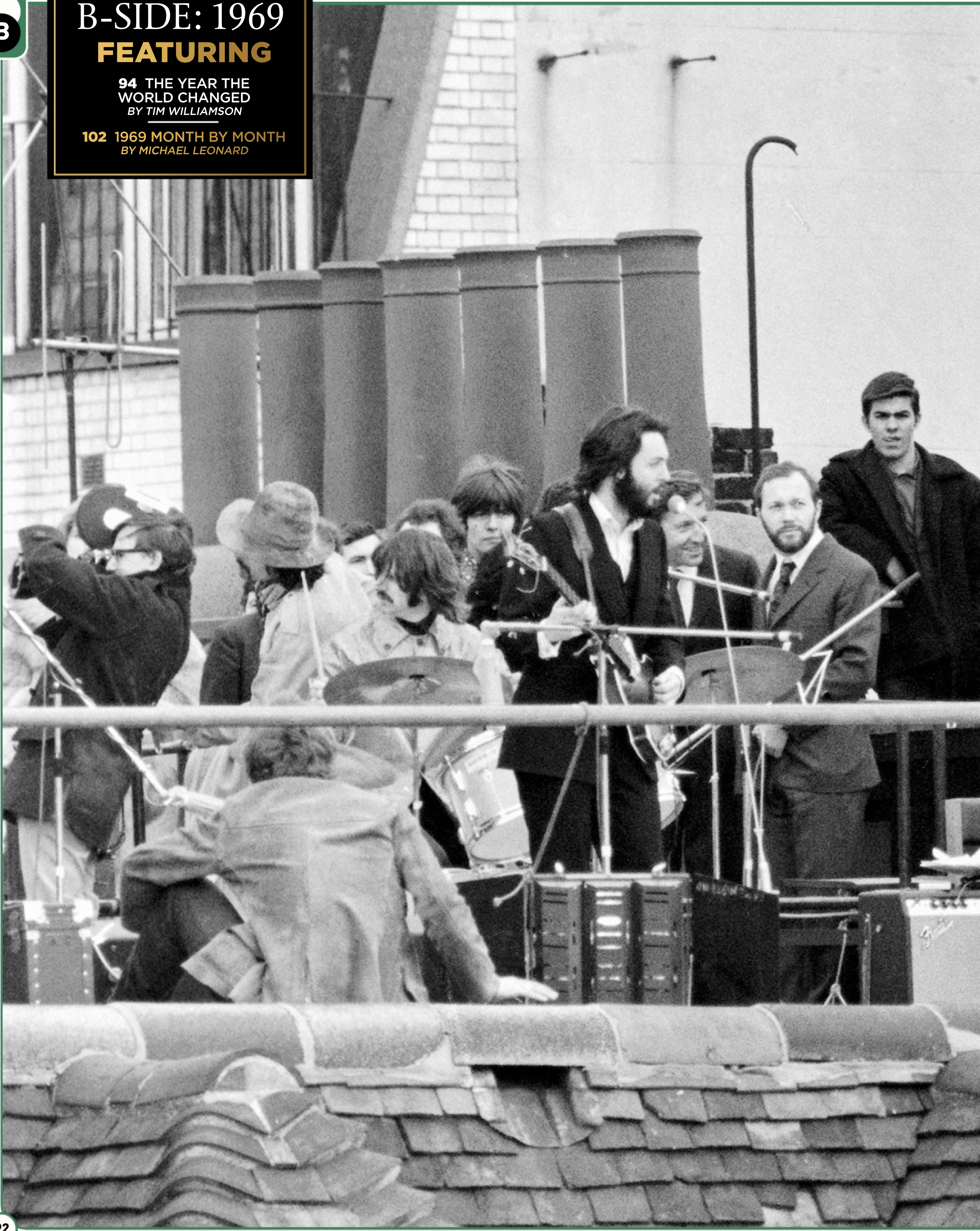
© Oli Scarff / Getty

B-SIDE: 1969

FEATURING

94 THE YEAR THE WORLD CHANGED
BY TIM WILLIAMSON

102 1969 MONTH BY MONTH
BY MICHAEL LEONARD



HOHNER

1969: THE END OF AN ERA

The Sixties was a decade of extremes. Simultaneously it saw the emergence of the hippie movement and the horrific war in Vietnam. The world's superpowers raced to reach the Moon, always with their fingers on the nuclear trigger. However, 1969 left perhaps the most profound mark on history, with events that still resonate over half a century later...

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THE VIETNAM WAR

After four years of fighting in Vietnam, American forces were no closer to victory over the North Vietnamese, and support for the war was beginning to wane. In May, the Battle of Hamburger Hill was a particularly bloody operation, the futility of which grew more support for the already strong anti-war movement. Protestors around the world demonstrated against the war, and students in particular voiced their opposition. The 27th June issue of LIFE magazine featured 'The Faces of the American Dead in Vietnam. One Week's Toll' on its cover, printing the photographs of 242 soldiers who lost their lives in seven days of the conflict.

Taking command after entering the Oval Office earlier the same year, President Nixon began a policy of 'Vietnamization' of the war – with the goal of transferring more direct responsibility for combat operations over to South Vietnam forces, and gradually withdrawing American forces from the conflict. However, despite this policy, by the end of the year, American casualties continued to mount, and in December the first draft of compulsory service in the armed forces was held. Those who avoided serving were labelled by some as 'draft dodgers' and risked prison sentences.

ABOVE : American troops helping the wounded after the Battle of Hamburger Hill

RICHARD NIXON'S INAUGURATION

20th JANUARY

Richard Nixon was sworn in as the 37th President after defeating Democrat nominee Hubert Humphrey and American Independent Party nominee George Wallace in the 1968 election. In his inaugural address, Nixon made reference to the recent triumphs in space exploration and the need to unify the nation, stating "the greatest honor history can bestow is the title of peacemaker."

RIGHT: Chief Justice Earl Warren (centre left) administers Nixon's oath of office during the inauguration ceremony

© Wiki; Official White House photo

© Wiki; Al Ahram

YASSER ARAFAT ELECTED

4th FEBRUARY

After his election to chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), Yasser Arafat became one of the key figures in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Although he remains a divisive figure, in 1994 Arafat was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his part in the Oslo Accords the previous year, which led to the creation of the Palestinian National Authority.

LEFT: Yasser Arafat (centre) was viewed as a revolutionary freedom fighter by some, but a terrorist by others

CONCORDE'S FIRST FLIGHT

2nd MARCH

Concorde became the first supersonic passenger aircraft in the world to enter commercial service when it flew with its inaugural passengers in 1976. (The Soviet Tupolev Tu-144 completed its first test flight in December 1968, but would not start running passenger flights until 1977.) It was capable of making transatlantic flights in around 3.5 hours – half the time of other commercial jets. However despite this huge time-saving, and popularity among those who could afford the expensive tickets, the series proved unprofitable and was eventually retired in 2003.

RIGHT Concorde's maiden flight lasted just 27 minutes. Its first supersonic test flight was conducted later that year on 1st October 1969

© Wiki; André Cros

© William Lovelace / Stringer / Getty Images

KRAY TWINS FOUND GUILTY
4th MARCH

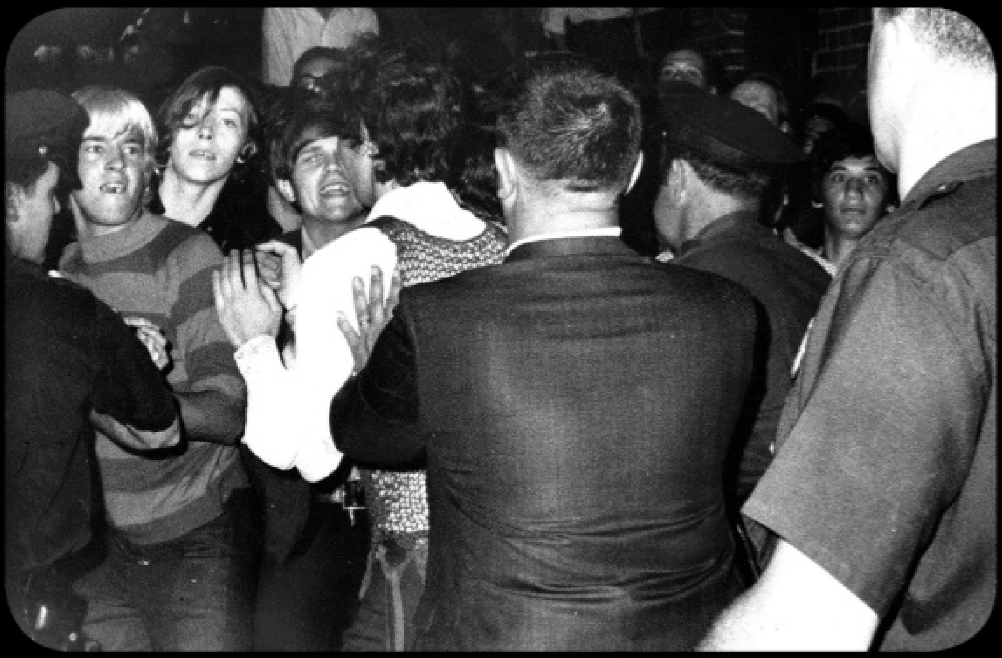
Notorious London gangsters Ronald 'Ronnie' and Reginald 'Reggie' Kray were arrested for murder in 1968 and found guilty the following year. The infamous twins were at the head of the violent criminal gang The Firm, and were involved in armed robberies, assaults, arson and more. They also owned several nightclubs frequented by celebrities. Both were sentenced to life imprisonment.

LEFT: The Kray twins enjoyed something of a 'celebrity' status as nightclub owners

STONEWALL RIOTS
28th JUNE – 1st JULY

In the early hours of 28th June, hundreds of gay rights activists took action against police brutality and discrimination, triggering a larger campaign for equal rights for LGBT people. Beginning in Greenwich Village, Manhattan, the riots centered around the Stonewall Inn, a gay-friendly bar, and in response to repeated police raids on gay bars and clubs in the city in New York. The protests brought attention to the discriminatory treatment of gay and lesbian people in the USA and are considered a key moment in the history of LGBT rights. The following year, the anniversary of the riots was marked with the USA's first Gay Pride Parade.

RIGHT: The Stonewall protests saw multiple clashes with police over several days



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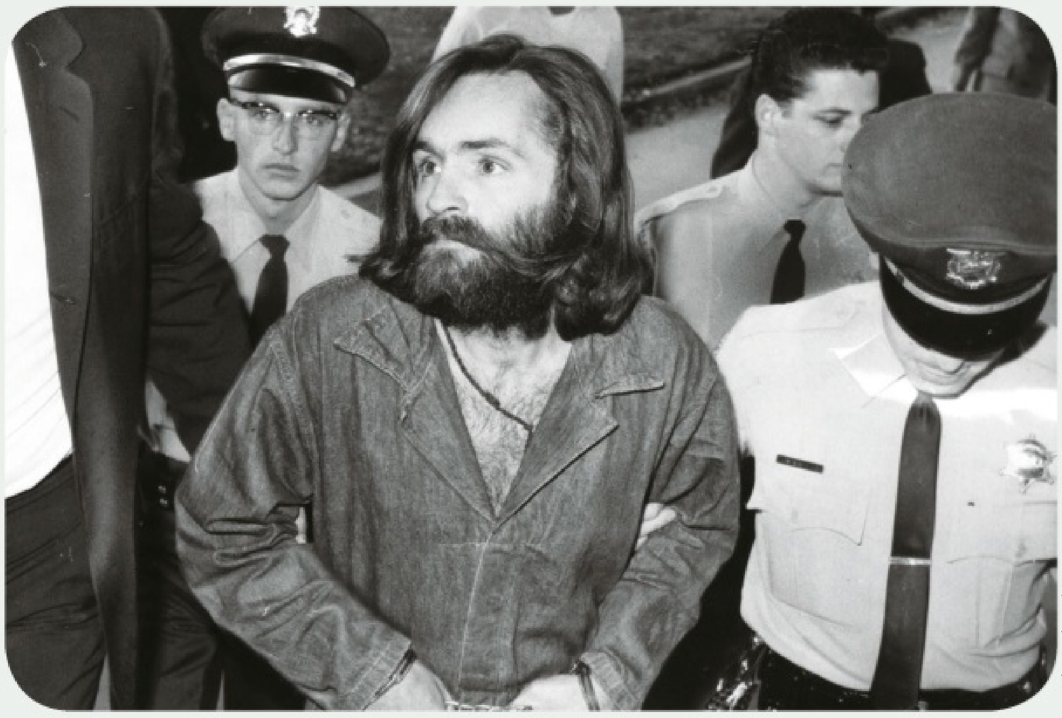

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THE MANSON FAMILY MURDERS
JULY-AUGUST

The 'Summer of Love' in the USA was violently interrupted by several horrific murders committed in Los Angeles that shocked the world. One of the victims was actress and model Sharon Tate, at the time pregnant with husband Roman Polanski's child. Police soon traced the crimes to Charles Manson and his associates, known as the Manson Family. Many members of the Family were young women who idolised Manson and were drawn into his influence by his connection to the music industry and his hippie lifestyle. Several were found guilty of carrying out the murders on his direction, and along with Manson spent the remainder of their lives in prison.

LEFT: Charles Manson and his group 'The Family' were responsible for a series of murders in California

© cindygoff/ Getty Images

THE CHAPPAQUIDDICK INCIDENT

18th JULY

Just a year after Robert Kennedy's assassination, the 'Kennedy Curse' struck again when his brother Ted crashed his car off a bridge and into a pond on Chappaquiddick Island, Massachusetts. The Senator fled the scene, leaving his passenger Mary Jo Kopechne trapped – she was later found dead. The incident soon gained the attention of the world when it was suggested Kennedy waited several hours before raising the alarm, though he denied this. He plead guilty to leaving the scene of an accident, but denied driving while under the influence of alcohol. Though the incident affected Ted's Presidential ambitions, he remained a US Senator until his death in 2009.

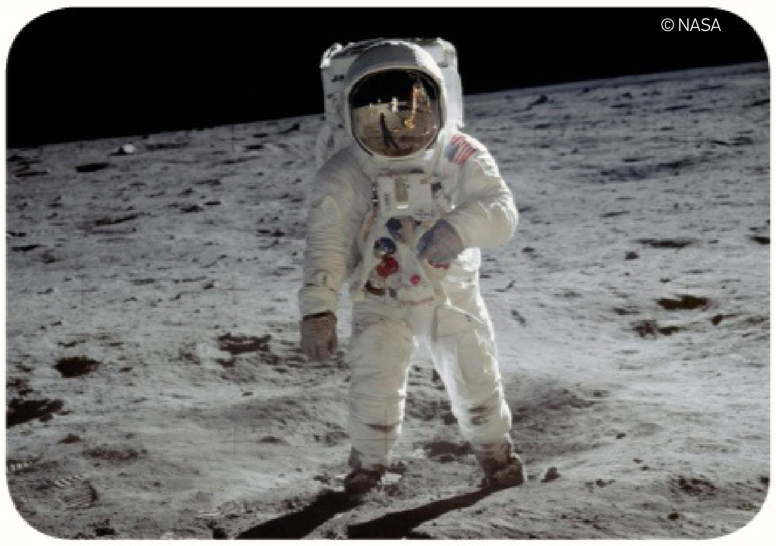
LEFT: Dike Bridge, over Pocha Pond, where the Chappaquiddick incident took place

THE MOON LANDING

20th JULY

In 1962 President Kennedy famously declared "We choose to go to the Moon" and committed to this groundbreaking achievement by the end of the decade. His goal was finally realised on 20th July 1969, when Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans to set foot on the lunar surface. Armstrong's famous line "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" originally was intended to be '*a* man', but nonetheless was heard by millions of people around the world. Up until this moment, the USA had been beaten at every point in the space race with the Soviet Union, but the lunar landing marked a resounding victory for NASA. Upon their return the crew were given a hero's welcome back to Earth, with a ticker tape parade through New York City.

However, Apollo 11 was just one of several missions in 1969 alone, and before the end of the year the crew of Apollo 12 followed in Armstrong and Aldrin's footsteps. Commander Charles Conrad and command module pilot Richard F Gordon spent over 31 hours on the surface, conducting two separate EVAs (Extravehicular Activity), gathering samples and conducting experiments.



© NASA

ABOVE: Over 600 million people across the world watched Armstrong and Aldrin (pictured) take the historic first steps on the Moon

© Peter Ferraz/ Getty Images

BATTLE OF THE BOGSIDE

12-14th AUGUST

During the period in British and Irish history known as 'The Troubles', the Bogside area of Derry-Londonderry became a hotpoint for sectarian violence between Protestants and Catholics, often also involving police and the British military. In August fighting broke out when a Protestant march drew close to the Bogside area, by this time unofficially renamed 'Free Derry' with a large, now iconic mural. Bogside residents and the Protestant marchers clashed on the streets, before the Royal Ulster Constabulary intervened – before long the violence had flared up in other areas of Northern Ireland. The rioting is considered the first major event in the history of 'The Troubles'.

LEFT: The Battle of the Bogside is considered to be one of the first major incidents of The Troubles in Northern Ireland

WOODSTOCK

15-18th AUGUST

With a lineup including Jimi Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane, The Who, Janis Joplin and more, the Woodstock Festival was a watershed moment in music history and a major moment in the Hippie movement of the 1960s. Festival goers travelled from across the USA to the small New York state dairy farm for 'three days of peace and music.' However the venue proved ill-equipped to handle the approximately 500,000 people who arrived – ten times what had been expected. Heavy rainfall also turned the site into a mud-bath, forcing delays to the planned performances.

RIGHT: The 1969 Woodstock Festival was originally planned to last for three days, but poor weather extended performances into the Monday

© Stringer / Getty Images

LIBYAN COUP

1st SEPTEMBER

Idris I, King of Libya, was ousted from power by a bloodless military coup (also known as the 1 September Revolution), led by Muammar Gaddafi and his so-called Free Officers. The new regime proclaimed Libya to be a Republic, and Gaddafi ruled the country with an iron fist until he in turn was overthrown and killed during the Libyan Civil War in 2011.

LEFT Gaddafi (centre) pictured with other Arab leaders at a summit, not long after the coup that led him to power

RUPERT MURDOCH BUYS THE SUN

15th NOVEMBER

Although today he is one of the most well known and powerful media moguls in the world, Rupert Murdoch began his business empire with the acquisition of two British newspapers, *The News of the World* in 1968 and *The Sun* a year later, realigning the paper – which was originally a broadsheet – into a more sensationalist tabloid.

RIGHT: Today, Murdoch's global newspaper empire includes *The Sun*, *The Times*, *New York Post*, *Wall Street Journal* and *The Australian* among many others

© Mike Kemp / Getty Images

B

BEATLEMANIA

Police struggle to hold back hysterical fans waiting outside Buckingham Palace while the band receive their MBEs in 1965

© Ted West / Stringer / Getty

1969 JANUARY

At the start of the year, Paul McCartney demos an early version of *Let It Be*.

Jimi Hendrix plays an impromptu version of *Sunshine Of Your Love* past his allotted timeslot on the BBC1 show *Happening For Lulu*. He and Cream's Eric Clapton had been friendly since the US guitarist arrived in London. Both were within The Beatles' immediate orbit. Hendrix covered *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts' Club Band* live just hours after its release. Clapton had played on *While My Guitar Gently Weeps*, written by George Harrison in 1968 (on *The White Album*). Both were partners of model Pattie Boyd.

Ex-Beatles drummer Pete Best won a defamation lawsuit against The Beatles. Best had originally sought $8 million (approximately $58 million in 2019 value), but ended up being awarded an apparently much-lesser (unspecified) amount. Best drummed for the Beatles for over two years early on the group's career and reportedly got sacked when producer George Martin expressed his dissatisfaction with his drumming at their Parlophone audition. The band replaced him with Ringo Starr. For his part, Best maintained for years that he was fired because the other three members were jealous of his success with the band's burgeoning female fan base. It was a messy end for someone who was a founder member. Cynthia Lennon, John Lennon's first wife, wrote in her 2006 book, *John*, that Pete Best "barely spoke to anyone" for two weeks afterwards.

On 30th January 1969, The Beatles perform for the final time in public, on the roof of the Apple building at 3 Savile Row, London. The performance, which was filmed for the eventual *Let It Be* movie, is stopped early by police after neighbours complain about the noise. *Let It Be* was mostly recorded before *Abbey Road*, but released after. The Beatles played a perhaps-surprisingly 'non-greatest hits' set. *Get Back* (two takes), *Don't Let Me Down* (two takes), *I've Got A Feeling* (two takes), *One After 909*, and *Dig A Pony*. And that was the last time The Beatles ever performed together. Even so, the performance became iconic. Witness U2 aping it for their rooftop video in Los Angeles for *Where The Streets Have No Name*. That U2 video won a Grammy in 1989.

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

Ob-La-Di Ob-La-Da by Marmalade reaches #1 in the UK charts, a first for a Scottish band

Lily The Pink by The Scaffold tops the charts for the fourth and final time after fifteen weeks in the Top 50

Albatross by Fleetwood Mac reaches #1 in the UK (it would prove to be the band's only UK #1 single)

I Heard It Through The Grapevine by Marvin Gaye remains at #1 in the US

ALBUMS

Best Of The Seekers by The Seekers enters at #1 in the UK

The Beatles (The White Album) by The Beatles remains #1 in the US

Led Zeppelin's eponymous debut album is released in the US

RIGHT: The Beatles' final live performance, a rooftop concert from the Apple building

"WE DECIDED, 'LET'S GET UP ON THE ROOF'"

RINGO STARR

© Mirrorpix / Getty

HOHNER

1969 FEBRUARY

© Fairfax Media Archives / Getty

George Harrison and John Lennon propose to hire Allen Klein as The Beatles' new business manager, against the wishes of Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr. Klein had contacted John Lennon after reading his press comment that the Beatles would be "broke in six months" if things continued as they were. In January 1969, Klein met with Lennon, who retained him as his financial representative, and the next day met with the other Beatles. Paul McCartney wanted to be represented by Lee and John Eastman, the father and brother respectively of McCartney's then girlfriend, Linda. Given a choice between Klein and the Eastmans, George Harrison

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

(If Paradise Is) Half As Nice by Amen Corner spends two weeks as UK #1

Where Do You Go To My Lovely by Peter Sarstedt begins a four-week stint at #1 in the UK charts

Build Me Up Buttercup by The Foundations enters the US charts and peaks at #3

Proud Mary by Creedence Clearwater Revival enters the US charts and spends seven weeks in the Top 10

Everyday People by Sly & The Family Stone starts a four-week run at the top of the US charts

ALBUMS

Goodbye by Cream reaches #1 in the UK for the first of four times this year

Yellow Submarine by The Beatles enters the US charts

Diana Ross & The Supremes Join The Temptations by Diana Ross & The Supremes With The Temptations starts a four-week run at #1 in the UK

Cloud Nine by The Temptations is released

© David Redfern / Getty

© Hulton Archive / Stringer / Getty

and Ringo Starr preferred Klein. Rancorous London meetings followed with both Eastmans, yet in April 1969, Klein was finally appointed as The Beatles' manager on an interim basis, with the Eastmans being appointed as their attorneys. Continued conflict between Klein and the Eastmans until the arrangement became unworkable later in 1969.

Eric Burdon & The Animals disbanded. Burdon went on to form a new group, Eric Burdon and War, later in the year.

On 18th February, the Jimi Hendrix Experience played the first of two shows at London's Royal Albert Hall. The band had played the venue before, in 1967, on a bill with Pink Floyd, The Nice, and The Move. This time, though, the Experience were headliners. It didn't go well, though. Hendrix was arguing about the sound quality, and manager Chas Chandler – ex-of The Animals, coincidentally – was unhappy with drummer Mitch Mitchell and bassist Noel Redding. "It truly was one of the worst shows I had ever seen," Chandler later told Hendrix biographer John McDermott. "Up until that point I had been a supportive of the group, because I thought that they made for a good unit. Now I felt it was time they got thrown out." It was the last time The Jimi Hendrix Experience played in Europe.

Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan recorded together in Nashville, Tennessee. Only one song, *Girl From The North Country*, would be initially released from these sessions. Bootlegs now abound.

Lulu and the Bee Gees' Maurice Gibb got married on 18th February. Lulu (real name Marie McDonald McLaughlin Lawrie) had been a friend of The Beatles since 1967. But the singer reportedly got into a big row with John Lennon at the launch party for *Magical Mystery Tour*, where she took him to task for flirting with other women and ignoring his then wife, Cynthia.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Bee Gees singer Maurice Gibb and Lulu during a trip to Sydney. The pair later split in 1973

TOP LEFT: Jimi Hendrix performing at the Royal Albert Hall on 24th February 1969. The show would be the final European concert for The Jimi Hendrix Experience group

BOTTOM LEFT: Eric Burdon (second from right) and The Animals rose to fame in the mid-Sixties with hits such as *The House of the Rising Sun, Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood* and *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*

1969 MARCH

After a performance at Miami's Dinner Key Auditorium, Jim Morrison of The Doors was arrested for indecent exposure during the show. Morrison was officially charged with lewd and lascivious behaviour, indecent behaviour, open profanity and public drunkenness. Morrison was sentenced to six months in prison and a $500 fine. Jim Morrison died in Paris (in 1970) before the jail term could be enforced.

The Who release *Pinball Wizard* as a single. It was the lead single for the band's later 1969 concept album *Tommy*, yet Pete Townshend once called it "the most clumsy piece of writing [I've] ever done".

UK blues-rock band Free release their debut album, *Tons Of Sobs*. It failed to chart at all in the UK, but it did reach #197 in the USA. With the band signed to Chris Blackwell's Island Records, stalwart Guy Stevens was hired to produce the album (he later became notable for producing early albums for Mott The Hoople and The Clash's *London Calling*.) He opted for a minimalist attitude to production due to an extremely low budget of around £800. It was due for release in late 1968, but the band wanted to add *The Hunter*, a cover of a Booker T Jones song.

On 12th March, Paul McCartney (the last bachelor Beatle) married Linda Eastman at Marylebone Registry Office in London. Linda was already four months pregnant with daughter Mary, to be named after Paul's own mother. It was a low-key affair. The Beatles, as a functioning band if not a business entity, were effectively over. Paul later said of Linda that time, that she "gave me the strength and courage to work again."

George Harrison and his then partner Pattie Boyd were arrested in the UK on charges of hashish possession. They were each fined £250.

John Lennon and Yoko Ono married in Gibraltar. At the end of March 1969, the newlyweds hosted their infamous 'Bed-In for Peace' in their room at the Amsterdam Hilton, turning their honeymoon into an anti-war event. While there, Lennon also learned from a morning newspaper that music publisher Dick James had sold his shares of The Beatles' Northern Songs to Lew Grade's Associated Television (ATV). The business troubles of The Beatles, somewhat astonishingly, were only just beginning. Even though the band was effectively finished already.

At the 14th annual Eurovision Song Contest – which was held in Madrid, Spain – the final result is a four-way tie for first place between Spain (*Vivo Cantando* by Salomé); United Kingdom (*Boom Bang-A-Bang* by Lulu); the Netherlands (*De Troubadour* by Lenny Kuhr) and France (*Un Jour, Un Enfantt* by Frida Boccara). As there was no tie-break rule in force at this time, the four entries involved, who each scored 18 points, are declared "ex-aequo" (equal) winners.

"WE CHOSE GIBRALTAR BECAUSE IT IS QUIET, BRITISH AND FRIENDLY"

JOHN LENNON ON HIS WEDDING TO YOKO

ABOVE LEFT: Jim Morrison of The Doors (pictured) died in July 1971. His death was among the first of the so-called '27 Club' – gifted musicians who coincidentally died at the age of 27 – along with Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Brian Jones

ABOVE RIGHT: Paul and Linda McCartney pictured at the Marylebone Registry Office where they were married in a civil ceremony on 12th March

BOTTOM RIGHT: After getting married in Gibraltar, John and Yoko used the publicity during their honeymoon to stage their first 'Bed-In for Peace' demonstration

© Hulton Archive / Getty

© Hulton Deutsch / Getty

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

I Can Hear Music by The Beach Boys is released and enters both the UK Top 50 and the US Billboard Hot 100

I Heard It Through The Grapevine by Marvin Gaye reaches #1 in the UK after climbing up the Top 40 for seven weeks

Aquarius / Let The Sunshine In by The 5th Dimensions enters the US Top Ten, where it stays for eleven weeks

Dizzy by Tommy Roe starts the first of nine weeks in the US Top 10, peaking at #1

ALBUMS

Goodbye by Cream reaches #1 in the UK for the first of four times this year

Wichita Lineman by Glen Campbell tops the US charts after 17 weeks in the Billboard 200

The Sound of Music soundtrack climbs back to a peak of #2 in the UK, even after over 200 consecutive weeks in the charts

1969 APRIL

© C. Maher / Stringer / Getty

The Beach Boys filed a lawsuit against their label, Capitol Records, for $2,041,446.64 in unpaid royalties and producer's fees for main songwriter/producer Brian Wilson. In 2019 terms, that's over $14m. Capitol retaliated by deleting most of its Beach Boys catalogue, severely limiting the band's in-shop income. Seems like sonic innovators/rivals The Beatles and The Beach Boys weren't the only ones battling big business.

The L.A. Free Festival in Venice, California, ends early following a riot of audience members, 117 of whom were arrested.

The Who performed their first complete performance of 'rock opera' *Tommy.* Bizarrely, it was debuted in Dolton, Devon, UK, a small village of (then) only 900 residents.

John Lennon officially changes his name from John Winston Lennon to John Winston Ono-Lennon. *John & Yoko*, the first recording of the later-released *Wedding Album*, was recorded made 22-27th April 1969. It was avant-garde, even for by late-1960s standards, with Lennon and Ono calling out each other's names, through a range of tempos and volumes over the sound of their heartbeats.

After the previous month's events, The Beatles made a $5.1 million counter offer to the Northern Songs stockholders in an attempt to keep Associated TV from controlling the band's music publishing. It failed.

The soundtrack for *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical* reaches Number 1 after lingering in the Billboard charts for 39 weeks. The groundbreaking musical told the story of hippies protesting against conscription for the Vietnam War, and featured profanity, nudity and the depiction of drug use.

"IT GIVES US NINE Os BETWEEN US, WHICH IS GOOD LUCK"

JOHN LENNON ON HIS NAME CHANGE

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

Israelites by Desmond Dekker & The Aces tops the UK charts

Get Back by The Beatles With Billy Preston enters the UK charts at #1, where it stays for six consecutive weeks

Bomm Bang-A-Bang by Lulu peaks at #2 in the UK

Aquarius / Let The Sunshine In by The 5th Dimension starts its six-week run at the top of the US charts

ALBUMS

Hair (Original Cast Recording) tops the US charts, where it remains for 13 consecutive weeks

Songs From A Room by Leonard Cohen enters at #2 in the UK

On The Threshold Of A Dream by The Moody Blues enters the UK charts at #3

© Imagno / Getty

ABOVE LEFT: John and Yoko with Allen Klein (left) during negotiations for control of Northern Songs shares

ABOVE: The cast of the chart-topping musical *Hair* during a performance in Vienna, 1969

RIGHT: The Beach Boys were pioneers of the sunny and optimistic 'California Sound'

© Bettmann / Getty

1969 MAY

Sly & The Family Stone released their breakthrough album, *Stand!*, which became one of the top-selling albums of the decade. It went on to sell half a million copies by the end of 1969 alone. What you may not know? Bassist Larry Graham is the uncle of rap star Drake.

Jimi Hendrix is arrested by Canadian Mounties at Toronto's International Airport for possession of narcotics (specifically, heroin). Hendrix was released on $10,000 bail yet still managed to play his scheduled concert that night (3rd May) in Toronto. Bandmates Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell both, separately, later claimed the drugs were "planted" in Hendrix's guitar case.

The ten-day Battle of Hamburger Hill began on 10th May. It would prove to be the most costly US Army offensive of the Vietnam War, with 72 Americans initially killed, seven MIA and more than 400 wounded.

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

Get Back by The Beatles With Billy Preston tops the charts on both sides of the Atlantic

My Sentimental Friend by Herman's Hermits reaches its UK peak at #2

In The Ghetto by Elvis Presley enters the US Top Ten

ALBUMS

Stand! by Sly & The Family stone is released, climbing to #14 in the US charts this month

My Way by Frank Sinatra enters the US Billboard 200

Nashville Skyline by Bob Dylan enters the charts, reaching #1 in the UK

Tommy by The Who is released

NASA's Apollo 10 launched on 18th May. After a successful eight-day mission to orbit the Moon, astronauts Thomas Stafford (commander), John Young (command module pilot) and Eugene Cernan (lunar module pilot) returned safely to Earth. The successful mission was essentially a 'dry run' for the upcoming manned Moon landing in July. The crew tested the complete Apollo spacecraft and lunar module, and performed all tasks short of actually landing on the lunar surface.

US pop band The Turtles, famous for *Happy Together*, performed by invite at the White House, Washington DC. Singer Mark Volman allegedly fell off the stage five times. They would later, in 1969, release the album *Turtle Soup*, produced by Ray Davies of The Kinks – the first outside work Davies had done with another band. It sank. The Turtles split in 1970. They remain infamous, however, for successfully suing De La Soul over an unauthorised sample on the hip-hop trio's 1989 debut album, *3 Feet High & Rising*. Among the tracks was a 12-second segment from The Turtles' 1969 song *You Showed Me*, used on an interlude album skit, *Transmitting Live From Mars*. Former Turtles Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman filed a $2.5-million lawsuit against De La Soul and producer Prince Paul (and company) in 1991. "Sampling is just a longer term for theft," Volman told the *LA Times*. "Anybody who can honesty say sampling is some sort of creativity has never done anything creative." Somewhat ironically, the song was not written by The Turtles themselves. It was written by Roger McGuinn and Gene Clark of The Byrds… friends of The Beatles, of course.

In London, representatives of Warner Brothers-Seven Arts are still discussing the purchase of 15 percent of The Beatles' Northern Songs catalogue. It doesn't work.

RIGHT: Students in Boston holding a sit-in to protest against the war in Vietnam

© Boston Globe / Getty

1969 JUNE

© Keystone-France / Getty

“NO ONE CHOOSES THE RIGHT SYMBOLIC OCCASSION; ONE TAKES WHAT’S AVAILABLE”

EDMUND WHITE, NOVELIST AND MEMOIRIST, ON THE STONEWALL RIOTS

John Lennon and Yoko Ono host another 'Bed-In For Peace', this time at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal, Canada on 2nd June. The couple recorded the song *Give Peace A Chance* live in their suite with Tommy Smothers, LSD guru Timothy Leary, and several others.

Mick Taylor joins The Rolling Stones, after the sacking of co-founder Brian Jones. Taylor later reflected, "The Beatles and The Stones were basically inspired by American Rhythm & Blues."

On 7th June, the newly-formed band Blind Faith played a free show In Hyde Park. The band was Eric Clapton (guitar, vocals), Steve Winwood (lead vocals, keyboards, guitar), Ric Grech (bass, violin) and Clapton's ex-Cream colleague Ginger Baker (drums, percussion). They first put out a promotional disc called *Change Of Address From 23 June 1969*, an instrumental that referenced their Island Records label's office move.

The Stonewall riots erupted in Greenwich Village, New York City. Police raids on gay bars were routine in the 1960s, but officers quickly lost control of the situation at the Stonewall Inn as regulars organised protests which turned ugly. Today, the pub's name is synonymous with LGBT campaigning and the fight for equal rights.

Bass player Noel Redding announces to the media that he has quit the Jimi Hendrix Experience, having effectively done so during the recording of the *Electric Ladyland* album.

© Archive Photos / Stringer / Getty

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

Dizzy by Tommy Roe reaches #1 in the UK

The Ballad Of John & Yoko by The Beatles is UK #1 for three consecutive weeks

Love Theme From Romeo & Juliet by Henry Mancini And His Orchestra reaches #1 in the US

It's Getting Better by Mama Cass enters the US charts

ALBUMS

Nashville Skyline by Bob Dylan reaches #3 in the US

His Orchestra, His Chorus, His Singers, His Sound by Ray Conniff enters the UK charts at #1

More by Pink Floyd enters the UK charts

This Is Tom Jones by Tom Jones reaches its #2 peak in the UK

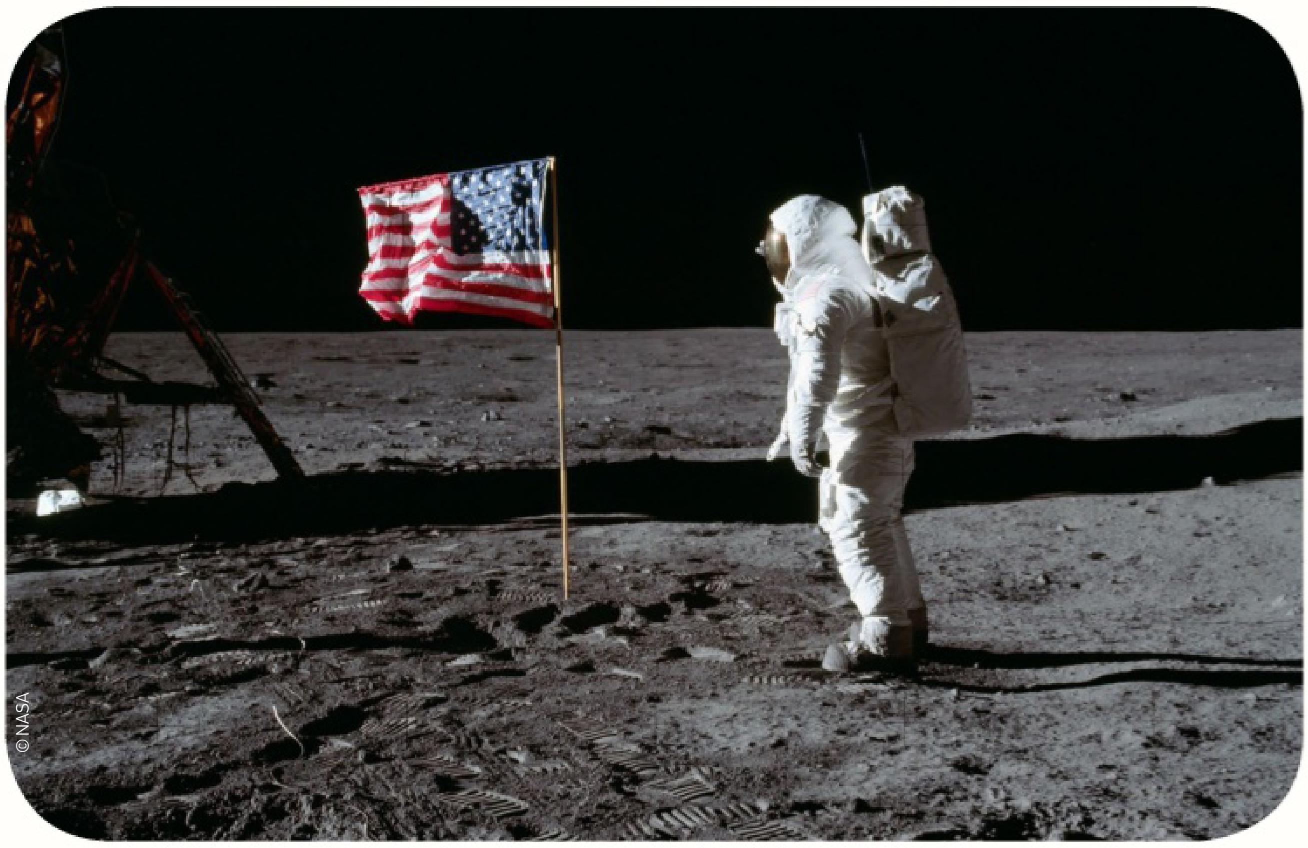
© New York Daily News Archive / Getty

LEFT: John and Yoko recorded *Give Peace A Chance* from their hotel room during their Montreal bed-in

TOP RIGHT: *Love Theme From Romeo & Juliet*, taken from the soundtrack to Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), knocked The Beatles off the top spot in the US singles charts

RIGHT: The Stonewall riots began in the early hours of 28th June. The event proved to be a watershed moment for the international gay rights movement

1969 JULY



© NASA

© Reg Burkett / Stringer / Getty

The United States' Apollo 11 became the first crewed mission to land on the Moon, on 20th July 1969. Just five days before the mission launched, David Bowie's *Space Oddity* was released and became the singer's first hit. Bowie said the song was inspired by the Stanley Kubrick-directed movie, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It was also the opening track of his second studio album, simply called *David Bowie*, and became one of Bowie's signature songs. The character of 'Major Tom' was revisited in *Ashes To Ashes* in 1980. An estimated 20 per cent of the Earth's population watched the first manned Moon landing – Bowie had his timing spot-on.

Former Rolling Stones member Brian Jones was found dead on 3rd July 1969, drowned in the swimming pool at his home in Sussex, England. It was less than a month after he had left the band. The shock of his death at the age of 27 led to several conspiracy theories. *Brian Jones: Who Killed Christopher Robin?* (Jones' home was previously owned by *Winnie The Pooh* illustrator EH Shepard) is a book by Jones' associate, Terry Rawlings, documenting the singer's final days and claiming he was murdered. Alternative rock band Mansun's 1998 album, *Six,* notably has many references to *The Taoism Of Pooh* (about links between Winnie The Pooh and philosophy), EH Shepard himself and the death of Brian Jones. Stones bassist Bill Wyman later said, "He [Jones] formed the band. He chose the members. He named the band. He chose the music we played. He got us gigs. He was very influential, very important, and then slowly lost it – highly intelligent – and just kind of wasted it and blew it all away."

Mick Jagger was asked by *Rolling Stone* magazine in 1995 if he felt any guilt over Jones' death. He answered: "No, I don't really. I do feel that I behaved in a very childish way, but we were very young, and in some ways we picked on him. But, unfortunately, he [Brian] made himself a target for it; he was very, very jealous, very difficult, very manipulative, and if you do that in this kind of a group of people you get back as good as you give, to be honest. I wasn't understanding enough about his drug addiction. No one seemed to know much about drug addiction. Things like LSD were all new. No one knew the harm. People thought cocaine was good for you."

On 5th July, The Rolling Stones headlined a free festival – The Stones In The Park – in Hyde Park, London. The concert also featured Third Ear Band, King Crimson, Screw, Alexis Korner's New Church, Family and The Battered Ornaments. It had been arranged before Brian Jones' death, and was intended to be a way to introduce Mick Taylor as the band's new guitarist, but instead it served more as a memorial to Jones. Mick Jagger read a short eulogy on stage before The Stones' set began, reading two stanzas of Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem on John Keats's death, *Adonaïs*. Keith Richards later wrote of the gig: "We wanted to see him [Jones] off in grand style. The ups and downs with the guy are one thing, but when his time's over, release the doves, or in this case the sackfuls of white butterflies."

ABOVE LEFT: Buzz Aldrin salutes the American flag after he and Neil Armstrong made history by landing on the Moon

ABOVE: The Stones In The Park attracted an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 fans

RIGHT: David Bowie in a promotional shot for his album, *Space Oddity*, which was released later that same year

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

In The Year 2525 (Exordium & Terminus) by Zager & Evans reaches #1 in the US for the first of six consecutive weeks

Something In The Air by Thunderclap Newman tops the UK charts

Honky Tonk Women by The Rolling Stones reaches #1 in the UK

Give Peace A Chance by The Plastic Ono Band peaks at #2 in the UK

ALBUMS

According To My Heart by Jim Reeves starts a four-week run at #1 in the UK

Blood, Sweat & Tears by Blood, Sweat & Tears regains the top spot in the US charts, ending the *Hair* soundtrack's 13-week reign

© Michael Ochs Archives / Getty

1969 AUGUST

© Taylor Hill / Getty

At the Woodstock Festival, Jimi Hendrix performed with a temporary band. The Jimi Hendrix Experience, like The Beatles, had effectively broken up, so Hendrix assembled a group he briefly called Gypsy Suns And Rainbows. One of his largest bands, it included two musicians he played with at the start of his career (bassist Billy Cox and guitarist Larry Lee), drummer Mitch Mitchell (who was part of the Experience), and two percussionists. The new 'group' performed just twice more before disbanding. Hendrix would soon form another trio, Band Of Gypsys.

An estimated 400,000 people attended Woodstock. Although the event was a recognised shambles in terms of organisation, it became a template for similar 'hippie' festivals. Hendrix's guitar-strafing performance of US national anthem *The Star-Spangled Banner* would prove to be iconic, although Hendrix had actually performed it 28 times before Woodstock.

On 22nd August 1969, The Beatles had their final photoshoot together as a band. The shoot took place at John Lennon's Tittenhurst Park home in Berkshire. No songs were played, they were clearly in disrepair, but the photos taken that day were the last of The Beatles as a group.

On 30th-31st August 1969, the second Isle of Wight Festival took place. Performers included (among many others) The Band, Blodwyn Pig, Edgar Broughton Band, Joe Cocker, Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band, Bob Dylan, Family, The Who and Free. But it was perhaps Joe Cocker who produced the most enduring performance: belting out The Beatles' *With A Little Help From My Friends*.

LEFT The Fender Stratocaster played by Hendrix for his rendition of *The Star-Spangled Banner* at Woodstock, 1969

TOP RIGHT: Joe Cocker performing at the Isle Of Wight Festival. Some consider his cover of *With A Little Help From My Friends* to be even better than the original

BOTTOM RIGHT: The crowd at Woodstock. It's estimated that over 400,000 people attended the festival

© Anwar Hussein /Getty

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

In The Year 2525 (Exorium And Terminus) by Zager & Evans becomes #1 in the UK

Honky Tonk Women by The Rolling Stones starts a four-week run at #1 in the US

Saved By The Bell by Robin Gibb reaches its UK peak of #2

ALBUMS

Stand Up by Jethro Tull enters the UK album charts at #1

From Elvis in Memphis by Elvis Presley tops the UK charts

Johnny Cash At San Quentin by Johnny Cash reaches #1 in the US

© John Dominis / Getty

1969 SEPTEMBER

In September 1969, after last minute arrangements, the newly-titled Plastic Ono Band performed at the Toronto Rock & Roll Revival show. This version of the quickly-assembled band included John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Eric Clapton, Klaus Voormann, and Alan White. The performance was recorded and later released as *Live Peace In Toronto 1969*.

Throughout the month, Elvis Presley was performing in Las Vegas, his first long-term engagement after the triumphant '68 Comeback Special' for USA TV recorded a year earlier.

On 20th September – in yet another meeting to sign a new recording contract negotiated by Beatles manager/advisor Allen Klein – Lennon tells Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr (George Harrison was not present) that he will be leaving The Beatles.

On 24th September, Deep Purple and London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra perform the Concerto For Group And Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall in London, in the first elaborate collaboration between a rock band and an orchestra. Rather than rock 'n' roll revival, so-called progressive rock had taken over.

On 26th September 1969, The Beatles released their *Abbey Road* LP. Some Beatles fans still debate whether *Abbey Road* (the last fully-recorded album before the group broke up) or *Let It Be* (largely finished but not released until April 1970) should be considered the band's final work.

© Fotos International / Getty

ABOVE RIGHT: Elvis performing at the International Hotel, Las Vegas. During his four-week Vegas residency he would often do two shows a day

RIGHT: The Plastic Ono Band, from left to right: Alan White, Eric Clapton, Klaus Voorman, John Lennon and Yoko Ono

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

Bad Moon Rising by Creedence Clearwater Revival reaches #1 in the UK and hold the top spot for three weeks

A Boy Named Sue by Johnny Cash reaches its UK peak position of #4

Sugar, Sugar by The Archies becomes US #1 for the first of four consecutive weeks

ALBUMS

Blind Faith by Blind Faith is simultaneously top of the UK and US charts for two weeks

Oliver! The Original Soundtrack reaches its highest UK chart position of #4

Nice by The Nice reaches its UK peak at #3

"I MUST ADMIT WE'D KNOWN IT WAS COMING AT SOME POINT"

PAUL McCARTNEY ON LENNON LEAVING THE BAND

© Mark and Colleen Hayward / Getty

1969 OCTOBER

© Robert Knight Archive / Redferns / Getty

© CBS Photo Archive / Getty

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

Je T'aime... Moi Non Plus by Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg reaches #1 on its second week in the UK charts

Sugar Sugar by The Archies reaches #1 in the UK and holds the position for eight weeks straight

I Can't Get Next To You by The Temptations reaches #1 in the US

ALBUMS

Abbey Road by The Beatles heads straight to #1 on its UK release, remaining there for eleven consecutive weeks

Green River by Creedence Clearwater Revival holds the top spot in the US charts

On 10th October, The Beatles' press officer, Derek Taylor, responded to the 'Paul is dead' gossip, saying: "Recently we've been getting a flood of inquiries asking about reports that Paul is dead. We've been getting questions like that for years, of course, but in the past few weeks we've been getting them at the office and home night and day. I'm even getting telephone calls from disc jockeys and others in the United States." News moved slower in those days. US radio station WMCA despatched Alex Bennett to the Beatles' Apple Corps headquarters in London on 23rd October, further to his extended coverage of the 'Paul is dead' theory. There, Ringo Starr told Bennett: "If people are gonna believe it, they're gonna believe it. I can only say it's not true." In another interview at this time, Lennon bluntly said that the rumour was "insane" but "good publicity for *Abbey Road*." Even 40 years on, *Time* included 'Paul is dead' in its feature on ten of the most enduring conspiracy theories.

The final single by Diana Ross & The Supremes, *Someday We'll Be Together*, is released. The song later becomes the final US #1 hit of 1969 (and of the 1960s). After a later concert in January 1970, Diana Ross leaves The Supremes to pursue a solo career.

On 22nd October, Led Zeppelin's second album is released (universally known as *Led Zeppelin II*). It was the band's first album to reach #1 on charts in the UK and the US. In fact, it was the album that knocked The Beatles' *Abbey Road* off the top off the US Billboard chart. *Whole Lotta Love* became an anthem. Although, being almost the opposite of The Beatles, Led Zeppelin declined to release any songs as singles in the UK. None at all.

Simon & Garfunkel begin work on their now-fabled album *Bridge Over Troubled Water*. But the first song they recorded was Boudleaux Bryant's *Bye Bye Love*, previously a hit single for The Everly Brothers who, of course, were a major influence on The Beatles.

ABOVE LEFT: John Bonham, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones and Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin arriving at Honolulu Airport carrying master tapes of *Led Zeppelin II*

ABOVE: Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel pictured during the filming of their television special, *Songs of America*, which aired later that year

RIGHT: Florence Ballard, Diana Ross and Mary Wilson of The Supremes

© ABC Photo Archives / Getty

1969 NOVEMBER

© Bettmann / Getty

"ELVIS HAS STAYING POWER IN A WORLD WHERE METEORIC CAREERS FADE LIKE SHOOTING STARS"

NEWSWEEK'S REVIEW OF ELVIS' 1969 VEGAS SHOWS

After seven years off the top of the charts, Elvis Presley hits #1 on the Billboard singles chart with *Suspicious Minds* on 1st November.

On 7th November, The Rolling Stones open their US tour in Colorado, USA. It's the first overseas show with Mick Taylor as new guitarist – and the band's first tour for two years.

Billboard magazine changes its policy of charting the A and B sides of 45 singles on its pop chart. The former policy charted the two sides separately, but the new policy considers both sides as one chart entry. The Beatles are the first beneficiary of the new policy as their current 45 single – featuring *Come Together* on one side, and *Something* on the other – accrues enough combined points to make the single a #1 hit. Similarly, Creedence Clearwater Revival's *Fortunate Son / Down On The Corner* accrues enough combined points to reach #3 three weeks later. The Billboard chart is still not only based on sales, but also radio playlists.

On 15th November, an estimated 500,000 people march through Washington DC for peace. At the time it was the largest anti-war rally in US history. Musicians in attendance included Arlo Guthrie (son of Woody Guthrie); Pete Seeger; Peter, Paul and Mary; and John Denver.

On 30th November, Simon & Garfunkel perform a TV special *Songs Of America*, ostensibly an hour-long show that is anti-war and anti-poverty featuring live footage from their 1969 tour.

© Bettmann / Getty

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

Yester-Me, Yester-You, Yesterday by Stevie Wonder reaches a peak of #2 in the UK

Suspicious Minds by Elvis Presley tops the US charts, Elvis' first #1 for seven years

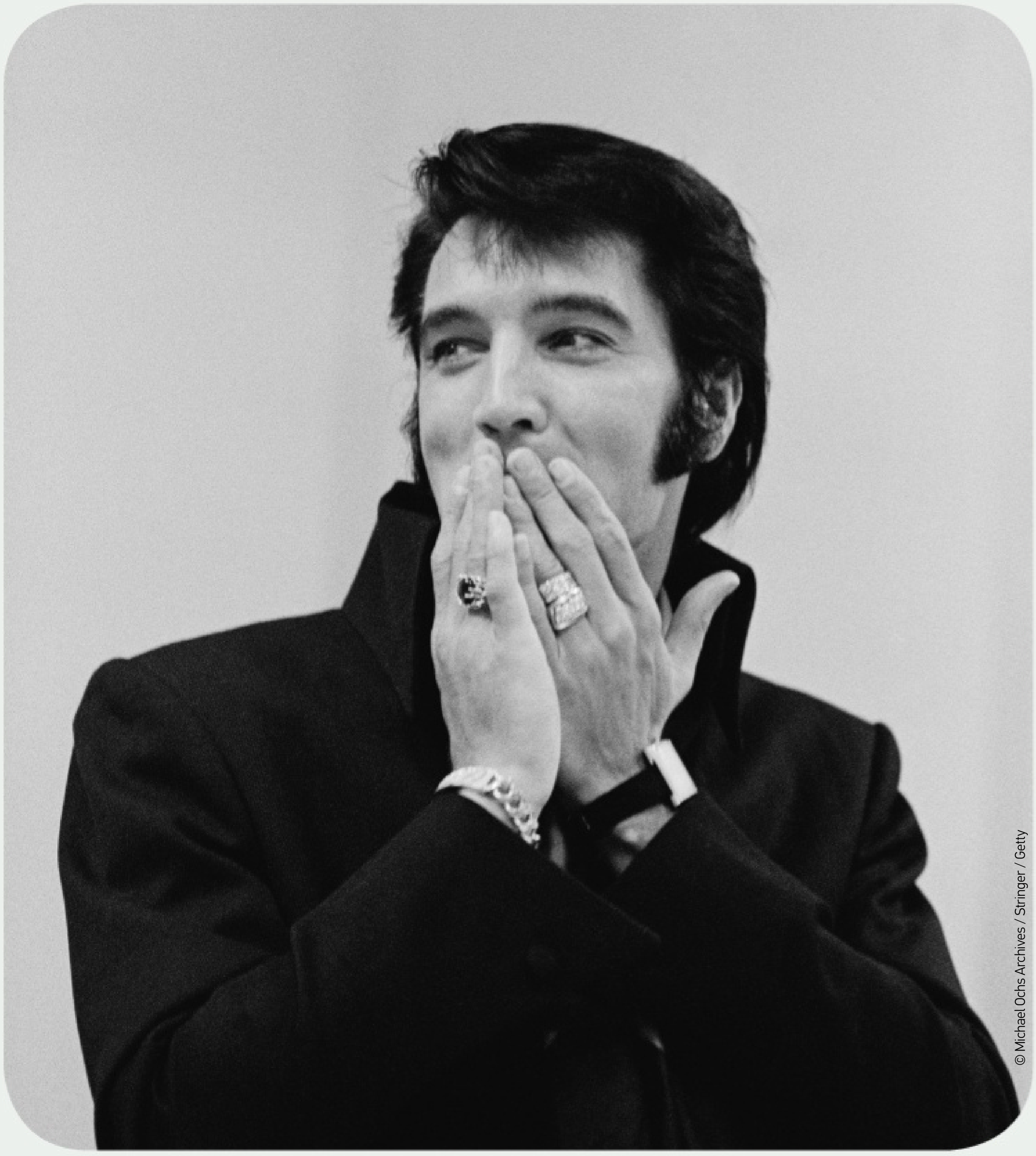
Wedding Bell Blues by The 5th Dimension reaches #1 in the US for 3 weeks

Come Together / Something by The Beatles as a joint single reaches #1 in the US

ALBUMS

Abbey Road by The Beatles reigns supreme at the top of the charts on both sides of the Atlantic

Led Zeppelin II by Led Zeppelin enters the UK charts at #4



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LEFT: The 'new' Rolling Stones lineup of 1969, from left to right: Charlie Watts, Mick Taylor, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Bill Wyman

ABOVE RIGHT: Thousands of protesters took to the streets in the capital for The Moratorium March on Washington, on 15th November

RIGHT: After spending several years focussing on his movie career, Elvis Presley returned to the charts with the #1 hit *Suspicious Minds*

1969 DECEMBER

The final edition of *The Beatles Book* monthly magazine is published.

George Harrison participated in a brief tour of Europe with the American group Delaney & Bonnie And Friends. During the tour – which also included Eric Clapton, Bobby Whitlock, drummer Jim Gordon and band leaders Delaney and Bonnie Bramlett – Harrison began to write *My Sweet Lord* which became his first single as a solo artist. Delaney Bramlett inspired Harrison to learn slide guitar, significantly influencing his later music.

On 6th December 1969, The Altamont Festival takes place in California. The concert featured (in order of appearance): Santana, Jefferson Airplane, The Flying Burrito Brothers and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, with the Rolling Stones taking the stage as the final act. The event is best known for considerable violence, including the stabbing to death of an 18-year-old man, Meredith Hunter. There were three other deaths: two caused by a hit-and-run car accident and one by LSD-induced drowning in a canal. The nasty debacle was all filmed, and later released as the documentary, *Gimme Shelter.*

BELOW: Around 300,000 fans headed to the Altamont Speedway Free Festival. The event's musical performances were overshadowed by violence

RIGHT: The documentary *Let It Be* followed The Beatles as they made the album of the same name

FAR RIGHT: *The Beatles Book* offered fans unrivalled access to the band through exclusive articles and photographs

©dcphoto / Alamy Stock Photo

©Bettmann / Getty

IN THE CHARTS

SINGLES

Na Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Goodbye by Steam reaches #1 in the US

Leaving On A Jet Plane by Peter, Paul and Mary tops the US charts

Someday We'll Be Together by Diana Ross And The Supremes takes the top spot just in time to be the last US #1 of the decade

Ruby Don't Take Your Love To Town by Kenny Rogers reaches its UK peak at #2

ALBUMS

Let It Bleed by The Rolling Stones knocks *Abbey Road* off #1 in the UK – but only for one week

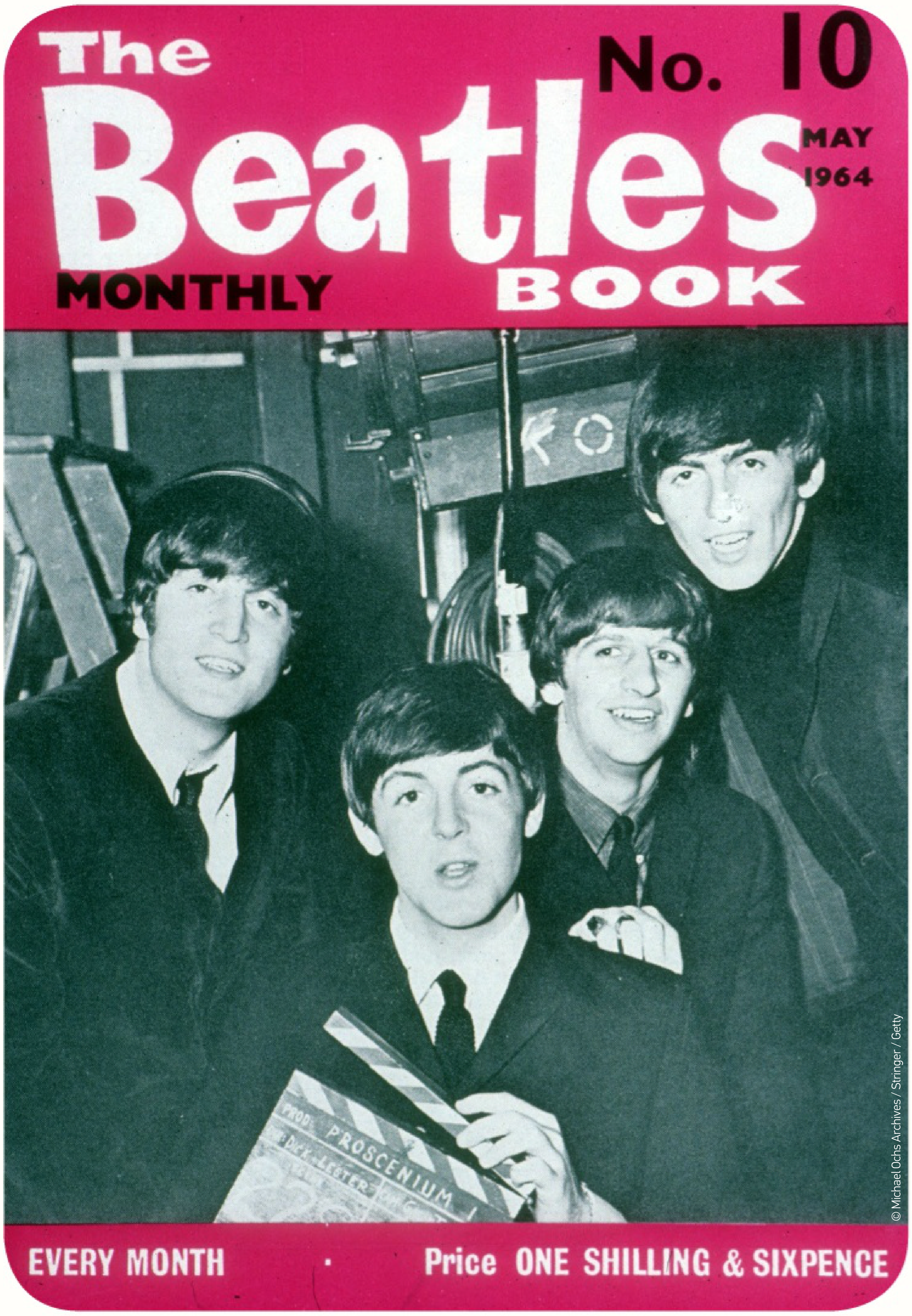
Led Zeppelin II by Led Zeppelin takes US #1 temporarily halting *Abbey Road*'s reign

To Our Children's Children's Children by The Moody Blues reaches its highest UK position at #2

The Jackson 5 release their debut album, at the time officially called *Diana Ross Presents The Jackson 5*.

When The Beatles decided that the unreleased proto-named *Get Back* album should be the soundtrack for Michael Lindsay-Hogg's documentary, producer Glyn Johns was asked to compile a set of songs that better reflected the film's content.

Glyn Johns had previously put together an album of tracks, which had been rejected by the group: even if they were not effectively a band anymore. On 15th December, Johns began work on another version, adding *Across The Universe* and *I Me Mine*. The four Beatles still weren't in agreement, though, and Johns was dismissed. Phil Spector was brought in. The album would be released as *Let It Be* in 1970. Technically, *Let It Be* (started in January 1969, but only completed in January 1970) was the final Beatles recording. John Lennon was not present. Newly married Linda McCartney sang some of the backing vocals.



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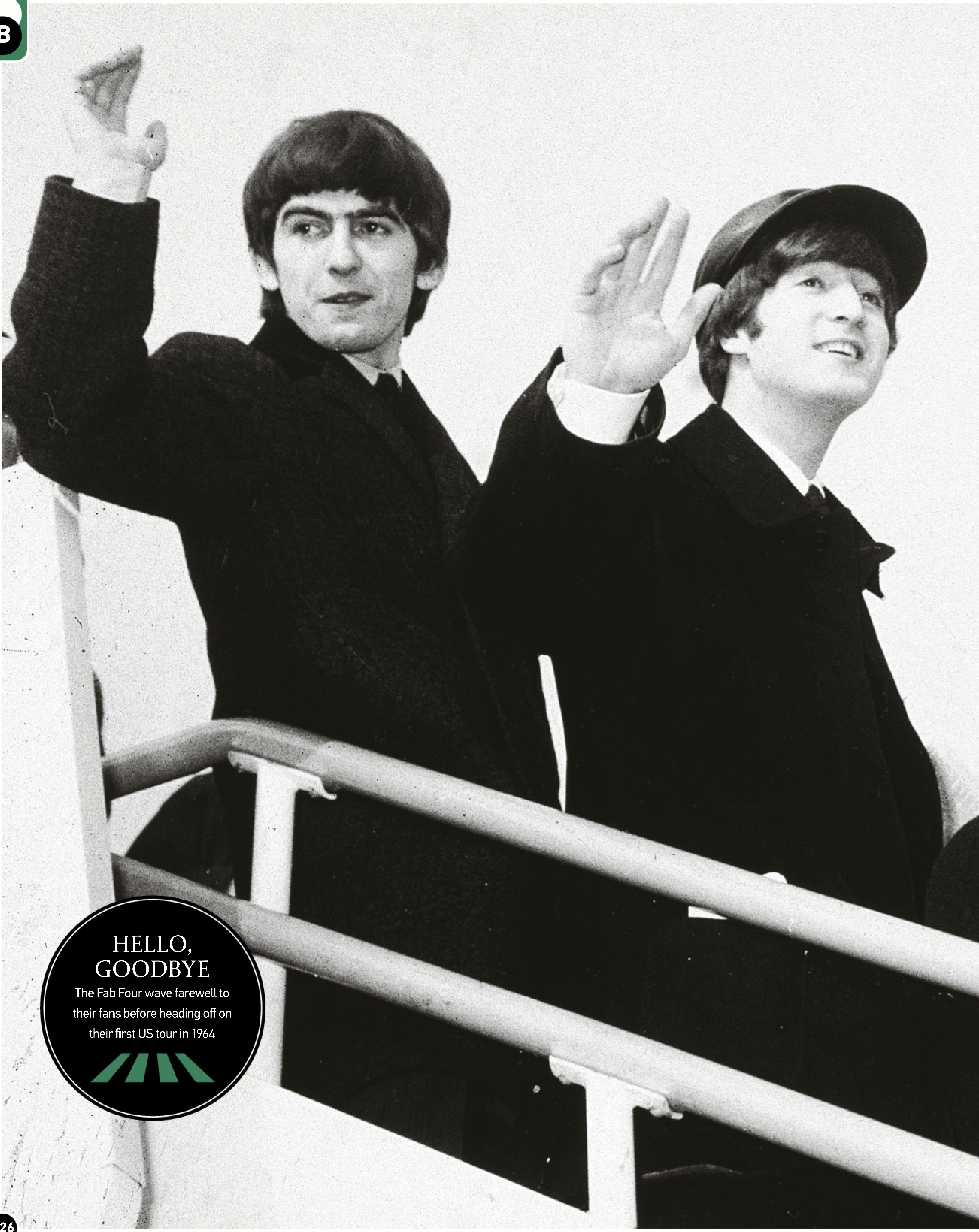
"IT WAS A PECULIAR VERSION OF AMERICAN MADNESS"

THE STONES' TOUR MANAGER ON ALTAMONT



HELLO, GOODBYE

The Fab Four wave farewell to their fans before heading off on their first US tour in 1964

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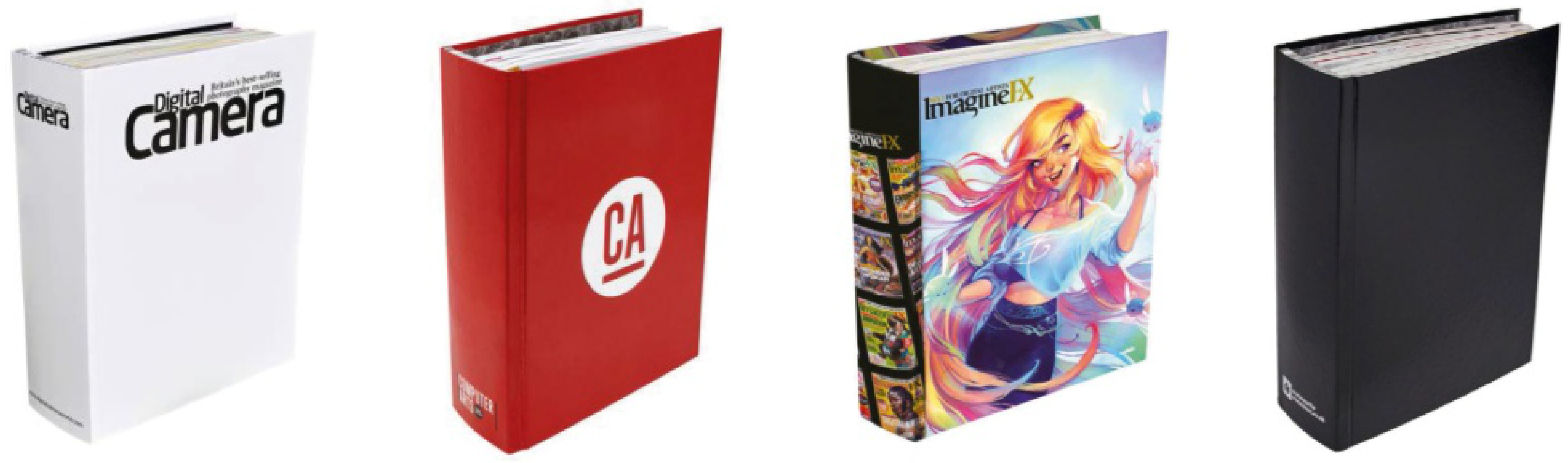

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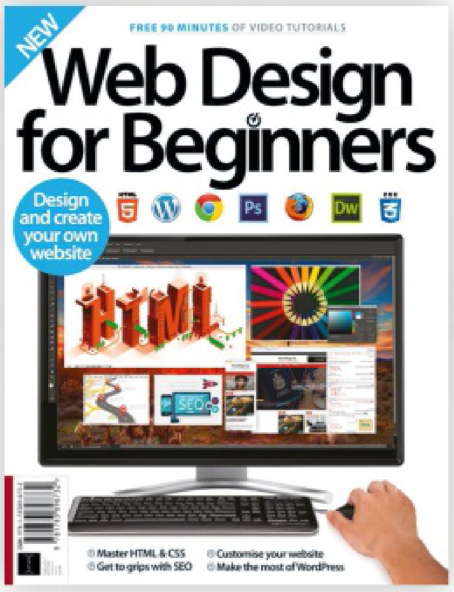

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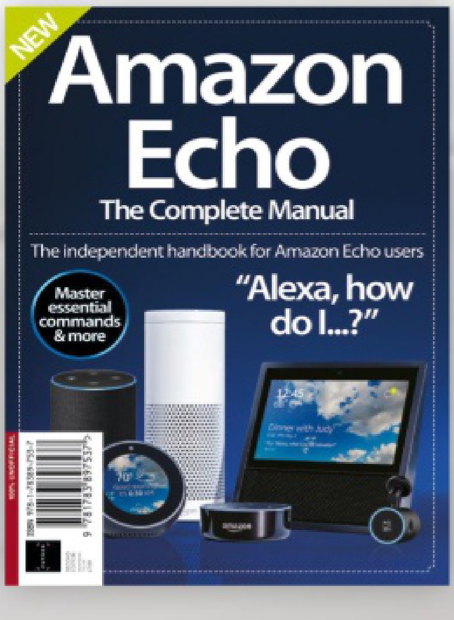

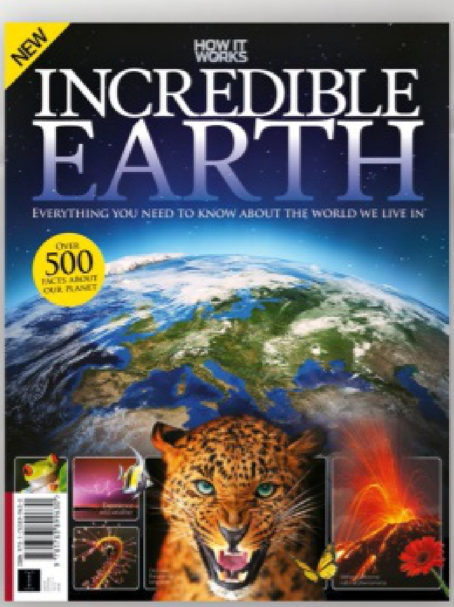

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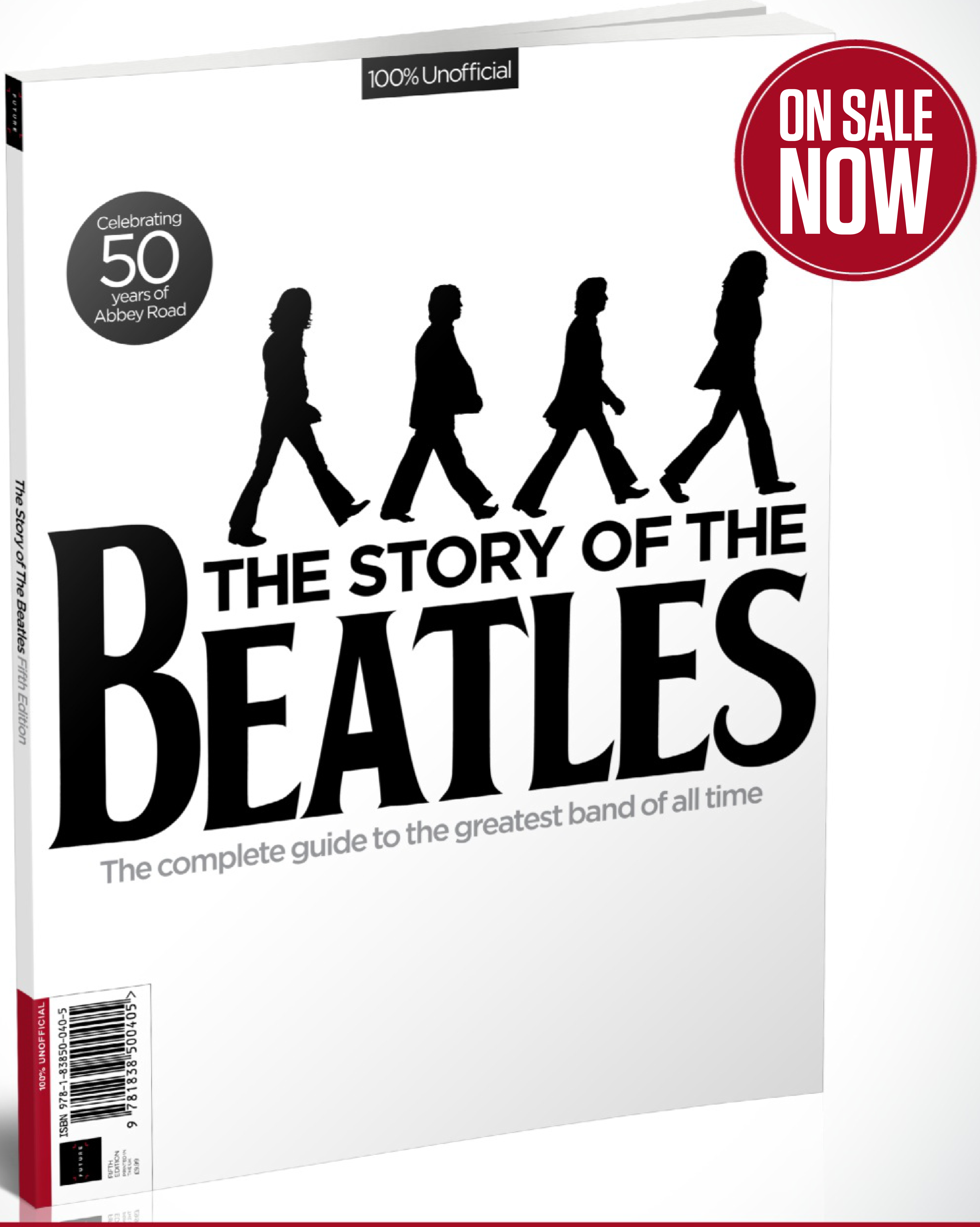

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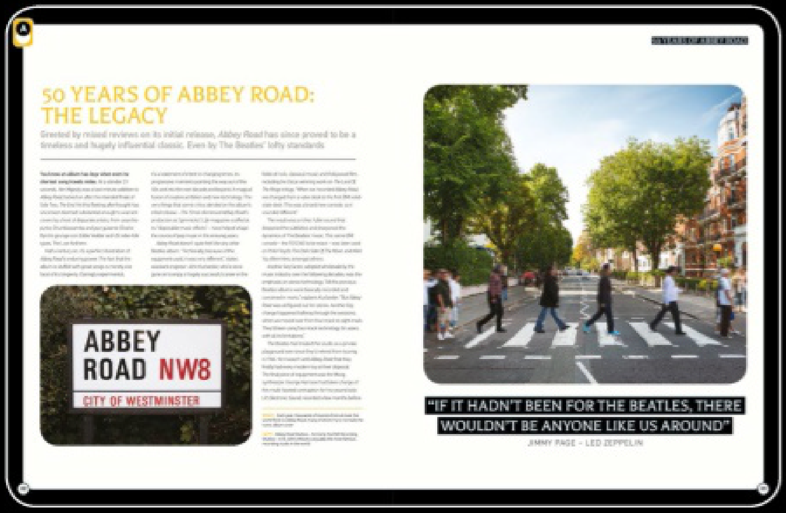

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